



INDUSTRY PRECOURSE BASICS: YOUR GATEWAY TO THE POOL AND SPA PROFESSION

WEEK 12: JOB READINESS AND CAREER PLANNING

LEARNER GUIDE



Your ticket to employment



Table of CONTENTS

3	INTRODUCTION
11	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR AGE
13	HARD AND SOFT SKILLS
14	CAREER GOAL SETTING
16	DEFINING AND MARKETING YOURSELF AS A BRAND
21	TIPS TO BUILD YOUR CAREER

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving workplace, individuals face unprecedented opportunities and challenges shaped by technological advancements, globalization, and shifting workplace dynamics. These changes require a proactive approach to career management, emphasizing personal accountability, continuous learning, and adaptability.



By understanding and applying proven strategies, professionals can navigate these complexities with confidence and purpose. This course is designed to help participants:

- Increase personal confidence through actionable and proven strategies.
- Achieve greater awareness of how careers are constructed within their organization.
- Explore a variety of career options within their organization and beyond.
- Become more proactive in managing their own career development.
- Boost morale and motivation to thrive in a dynamic professional environment.

This course will equip you with tools and insights to build a resilient, self-directed career in a world where the only constant is change. Through interactive activities, reflective exercises, and practical strategies, you'll be empowered to define and achieve your career goals with clarity and confidence.

THE ELEPHANT AND THE STAKE: A LESSON IN LIMITING BELIEFS

Once upon a time, in the vast savannah of Africa, a young elephant was born. From the moment it came into the world, it began to grow and learn the ways of the wild, led by its mother. As with all elephants, the young one had a natural curiosity and a boundless energy that kept it exploring the world around it.

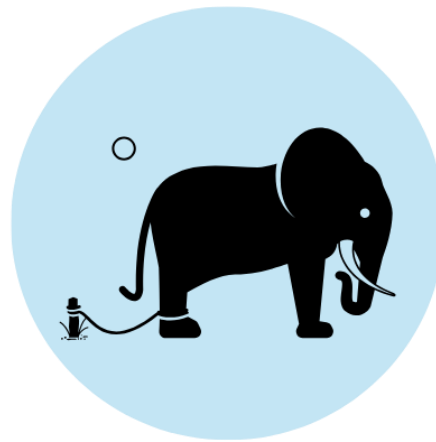
When the elephant was still a baby, its keeper, a man who worked for a traveling circus, decided to train it. To begin this process, he tethered the elephant to a small stake driven deep into the ground with a thick, heavy rope. The young elephant struggled fiercely at first, tugging at the rope and pulling with all its might. But despite its efforts, the elephant was too small and weak to break free.



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Over time, the elephant grew accustomed to the feeling of being tied to the stake. Each time it tried to break free, it felt the tension in the rope and was unable to move beyond a certain distance. Slowly but surely, the young elephant learned that it was powerless against the rope and the stake. It no longer fought against its restraints, and instead, it simply accepted the situation. The rope had become an invisible force in its life, so powerful in its mind that it no longer needed to be physically present to stop the elephant from attempting escape.

Years passed, and the elephant grew into a massive, powerful adult. It had long since outgrown the small stake that had originally held it captive. Yet, despite its immense strength, the elephant never attempted to pull free. The memories of its earlier struggles, when it was unable to escape, had become ingrained in its mind.



The rope was no longer needed to hold the elephant in place because it had internalized the belief that it could not break free.

The circus keeper, now an older man, would still tie the elephant to that same small stake. He would use a thin, weak rope that could not possibly contain the strength of the full-grown animal. But the elephant, conditioned by years of learned helplessness, never even bothered to test the rope. It had been taught, in its formative years, that freedom was beyond its reach, even though the reality had changed long ago.

The elephant's story is a powerful metaphor for how we, as humans, can become bound by invisible barriers created by our own limiting beliefs. Just as the elephant once struggled against the stake and rope, we often find ourselves constrained by obstacles that we have no real control over—obstacles that only exist in our minds.

THE PARALLEL TO HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

In life, we all face challenges that seem insurmountable, just like the young elephant's struggle with the rope. When we are confronted with difficulties, especially early in life or in new environments, we often form beliefs about what we can achieve. These beliefs shape how we respond to challenges, and they can either empower or limit us.

As we encounter setbacks, fail at tasks, or face resistance, we start to form mental associations. These associations can be either positive or negative. For example, if you failed a test as a child, you may internalize the belief that you are “bad at math” or “not good enough” to succeed.

You may then stop trying or avoid situations where that belief might be tested again. Like the elephant, you might have grown so accustomed to this belief that, even as an adult, you never attempt to test your true potential.

Similarly, in the workplace, people can become “tied to a stake” by limiting beliefs about their abilities or the company’s culture. They might feel that they are unqualified for a promotion or that their contributions go unnoticed. Over time, these beliefs can prevent individuals from taking action, seeking new opportunities, or even speaking up in meetings.

Like the elephant, they have internalized their limitations, and these beliefs stop them from realizing their full potential.

BREAKING FREE FROM THE STAKE

The key to breaking free from the “stake” in our lives lies in recognizing and challenging the limiting beliefs that hold us back. Just as the elephant could break free if it decided to test the rope, we too can challenge the barriers we have created for ourselves. Often, these barriers are not real but imagined, and they can be dismantled once we recognize their existence.

1. ACKNOWLEDGE THE “STAKE”

The first step in breaking free is to acknowledge the mental constraints or limiting beliefs that are holding us back.

This might require introspection and reflection, asking yourself:

What are the things I avoid doing because I believe I cannot do them or don't like doing them?

2. IDENTIFY THE SOURCE

Once we’ve acknowledged the limiting belief, it is important to identify its source. Did it come from past experiences, a failure, a comment someone made, or a social norm that you’ve internalized?

Understanding where the belief originated can help you understand its lack of basis in the present.



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3. CHALLENGE THE BELIEF

The next step is to actively challenge the belief. Ask yourself, *Is this belief truly valid?* Are you certain that your abilities are limited in this area? It's essential to reframe the belief. There are three powerful reframes:

- Up until now
- In the past
- Yet

"I may not be good at this yet. I can improve through practice" or "This challenge is an opportunity for growth, not a barrier to my success."

Refer to your acknowledgement of the stake and use each reframe to reframe your belief.

4. TEST THE LIMITS

The elephant's failure to break free from the rope was due to its learned helplessness. The solution for us is to test the limits.

Step out of your comfort zone and confront the tasks or challenges you've been avoiding.

As you succeed, you will begin to realize that your limitations are not as strong as you thought.

What the mind thinks, the body follows.

5. EMBRACE A GROWTH MINDSET

Adopt a growth mindset, as proposed by psychologist Carol Dweck. This mindset emphasizes that abilities are not fixed, and intelligence can be developed over time.

With the right effort, persistence, and learning, you can overcome any obstacle, just like the adult elephant could break free if it chose to.

CONCLUSION

The story of the elephant and the stake is a powerful reminder that the greatest barriers in life are often the ones we build for ourselves.

These invisible barriers are formed by limiting beliefs that restrict us from pursuing our full potential.

By recognizing these beliefs, challenging their validity, and testing our true limits, we can break free from the mental "stakes" that bind us and move forward with confidence and empowerment.

Just as the elephant, if given the opportunity, could easily break the rope that holds it, we too can shatter the limits that we have set for ourselves.

The first step is realizing that we have the power to create new opportunities for growth, change, and success. By doing so, we will unlock the true potential that lies within us.

Sometimes our mindsets can become similarly paralyzing. Or our successful past may block our vision of the future.

If we are fearful or unaware, we may find ourselves tied to a small stake of mindsets that does not look objectively at our opportunities.



CAREER MANAGEMENT IN A CHANGING WORLD

Workplaces have transformed significantly in the past 5-10 years due to technological advancements, globalization, and shifting employee expectations.

Remote and hybrid work models have emerged as dominant trends, reshaping traditional working structures. These models emphasize flexibility and allow employees to work from home (WFH) or alternate between home and office environments.

This evolution has introduced virtual collaboration and asynchronous communication as the norm. Organizations now focus on productivity outcomes rather than the number of hours worked. These changes have prompted individuals to adopt self-managing careers, requiring personal accountability for skill development and professional growth.

Research indicates that individuals now change jobs at least seven times in their working lives and careers at least five times. The concept of a “job for life” has given way to diverse career paths involving roles that may not have existed five to ten years ago. Many of these opportunities are tied to advancements in technology, including computer-based systems and the Internet.



THE NEW ORGANIZATION

Organizations today are defined by flexibility and innovation. Remote-first and hybrid work arrangements have replaced traditional in-office schedules in many sectors. Digital tools like Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Zoom now play critical roles in enabling seamless communication and collaboration. Organizations measure employee performance based on deliverables rather than hours worked, fostering a culture of results-driven accountability.

However, this shift also brings challenges, such as maintaining company culture, ensuring equitable opportunities for all employees regardless of location, and mitigating burnout caused by blurred boundaries between work and home life. Workforce diversity has become an organizational priority, with businesses implementing intentional diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies to create more inclusive work environments.

THE NEW EMPLOYEE

Today's workforce demands greater autonomy and self-direction.

The unwritten loyalty contract between employees and employers has been replaced with a "new deal" in which workers prioritize their teams and professions over their employers.

Technological advancements have shortened the lifecycle of skills, making continual learning essential for staying competitive.

Additionally, thriving in team-oriented environments requires advanced communication, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills.

Recent research indicates that the traditional concept of a "job for life" is becoming increasingly rare.



Individuals are now expected to change jobs multiple times throughout their careers.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, people born between 1957 and 1964 held an average of 12.4 jobs between the ages of 18 and 54.

While precise data on the number of career changes is limited, estimates suggest that individuals may change careers between 3 to 7 times during their working life.

This trend is influenced by various factors, including technological advancements that have led to the creation of new occupations, many of which involve working with computer-based systems and the internet.

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Moreover, the rise of the gig economy and the increasing prevalence of self-employment indicate that many future occupations may involve working independently or in small businesses. This shift underscores the importance of adaptability and continuous learning in the modern workforce.

It's also noteworthy that frequent job changes can impact long-term financial planning.

Research found that individuals who switch jobs often may experience reductions in retirement savings, potentially leading to significantly less retirement wealth over a 40-year career.

The evolving job market requires individuals to be flexible and proactive in managing their career paths, embracing lifelong learning to navigate the dynamic landscape of employment successfully.



SELF-DIRECTED CAREERS

Reengineering, downsizing, outsourcing, and de-jobbing have fundamentally altered the employer-employee relationship, replacing the traditional loyalty contract with a “new deal.”

Employers now prioritize cost-effectiveness, offering work only as long as employees' contributions outweigh their costs.

Consequently, employees have shifted their loyalties: first to their teams or projects, second to their professions, and third to their employers.

Today's workers must take full responsibility for managing their own careers.

CONTINUAL RETRAINING

Advances in information technology have significantly shortened the life cycle of products, knowledge, and work-related skills. Workers are expected to change careers three to four times during their lives—and by some estimates, as many as seven to ten times. Each career change demands the acquisition of new skills.

To navigate this shifting landscape, workers must take charge of their own careers and commit to lifelong learning.

WORKING IN TEAMS

Teamwork has become a cornerstone of modern workplaces, yet it can be challenging for individuals from cultures that emphasize individual achievements. Successful teamwork depends on strong communication skills, including problem-solving, group decision-making, and interpersonal skills such as active listening and conflict resolution. High-performance teams thrive when members work collaboratively and communicate effectively.

ALIENATION AND STRESS

While stress can motivate employees to achieve goals, the rapid and unexpected changes brought about by downsizing and reengineering can have detrimental effects.

Workers are often required to take on additional tasks and work harder without increased pay or job security. This environment can lead to feelings of alienation and heightened stress, underscoring the need for resilience and adaptability in the workplace.

NEW WORK HABITS AND WAYS OF THINKING

To succeed in today's rapidly changing world of work, employees must adopt new habits and perspectives:

1. Increase Your Sense of Personal Responsibility



The shift from entitlement to accountability is reshaping workplace expectations. Rewards are now more closely tied to individual performance. The once-common assumptions of regular pay raises, promotions, and perks no longer align with current realities. Embrace responsibility, reject excuses, and focus on personal accountability.

2. Accept Ambiguity and Uncertainty



Today's work environments are fluid, fast-paced, and ever-changing. Embrace the uncertainty of constant transition and learn to improvise when faced with the unexpected. Adaptability is key to thriving in this state of flux.

3. Become a Lifelong Learner



In an era where knowledge is power, continuous learning is essential to remaining competitive. Develop transferable skills, stay informed about trends in your industry, and invest in your own growth and self-renewal. While employers may offer resources, the ultimate responsibility for lifelong learning rests with you.

4. Be a Fixer, Not a Finger-Pointer



Change naturally brings challenges, but blaming others wastes valuable time. Employees who take the initiative to solve problems and implement innovative solutions will stand out as indispensable contributors.

5. Manage Your Own Morale



The belief that management is solely responsible for employee morale is outdated. Take personal responsibility for your emotional well-being and job satisfaction. By managing your own morale, you empower yourself to thrive, even in challenging circumstances.

6. Behave Like You're in Business for Yourself



Organizations are adopting entrepreneurial models to increase agility and respond to shifting customer needs. Employees must think and act like entrepreneurs within the company—taking ownership of their roles, expanding beyond outdated job descriptions, and contributing to the success of the entire organization.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR AGE

Research over the period 1978—1988 showed that people have different needs and wishes in the different stages of their lives. There are three types of stages and each stage usually lasts about seven years. They are not exact to the day or even to the year. Understanding the general flavour of a stage can help explain why some people behave the way they do and why things that are important to you at one stage are not so important to others who are older or younger.

PLOTTING YOUR STAGE

Understanding the stages of life and their corresponding work priorities is essential for career planning. People typically move through three distinct phases every seven years:

1. Outgoing stages (e.g., ages 0-7, 22-28, 43-49) involve energy and enthusiasm for new beginnings.

Finding your feet may seem an appropriate expression for a three-year old, but it is just as likely that say, a woman of 44 may be feeling that she is just finding her feet again. In these stages people are going out into the world, doing new things, taking new steps, making changes. These stages need energy and enthusiasm both from the person themselves and from those close to them.

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2.Consolidating stages (e.g., ages 8-14, 29–35, 50–56) are marked by stability and professional growth.

In these stages, people are more settled at home or at work. They have a better idea of who they are, where they are and where they are going. Don't worry if you are the exception! In these stages people deepen their work experience, get more qualifications and become established.



3.Reviewing stages (e.g., ages 15-21, 36–42, 57–63) prompt introspection and exploration of new directions.

Recognizing your current stage can help you embrace its unique opportunities and challenges. In these stages, people are wondering who they are, where they are going, what there is for them to do next. The teenage years are typical of these stages. People in the 36-42 and 57-63 ages often remark that they feel just as challenged as they did in their teens - and just as misunderstood! For mothers, the 36-42 stage may be when they return after a career break. For childless women, it's a last chance to have children.

AFTER 63

Research shows that the time after 63 does not fall into the three stages given above. People over 63 describe it as "free time" because they are frequently free of the need to work. Equally among those still working there is evidence of major initiatives being taken by people in their 70's. People in their 70's and 80's and in some cases, their 90's, start new hobbies, travel to new places and change their ways of living.

Knowing about the stages means you can:

- Realize you're not alone
- Go with the flow of the stage you are in
- Be pleased and enjoy a stage when it's good
- Know it won't last forever when it's difficult
- Catch up with things you missed out on last time you were in this stage
- See ahead to the next stage



HARD AND SOFT SKILLS

Hard skills are the technical and cognitive abilities that enable you to perform your job effectively. These skills are often measurable and include:

- **Planning:** Strategizing tasks to achieve specific goals.
- **Organizing:** Structuring workflows to improve efficiency.
- **Time Management:** Allocating time wisely to meet deadlines.
- **Accuracy:** Ensuring precision in work output.
- **Prioritizing:** Identifying and focusing on the most critical tasks.

Soft skills, on the other hand, are interpersonal and self-awareness skills that help you build and maintain positive relationships with others. These skills include:

- **Self-Awareness:** Recognizing and understanding your own emotions and behaviors.
- **Self-Management:** Controlling impulses, adapting to change, and staying motivated.
- **Empathy:** Understanding and sharing the feelings of others.
- **Perception:** Accurately interpreting verbal and nonverbal cues.
- **Motivation:** Driving yourself and others to achieve goals.



HARD SKILLS

Success in today's workplace requires a balance of hard and soft skills:

- Hard skills encourage you to complete tasks with precision and efficiency. For example, effective time management ensures you meet deadlines, while strong organizational skills help streamline processes.
- Soft skills encourage you to communicate effectively, adapt to changing environments, and collaborate with colleagues. Emotional intelligence, for instance, helps you navigate workplace dynamics and build strong relationships.

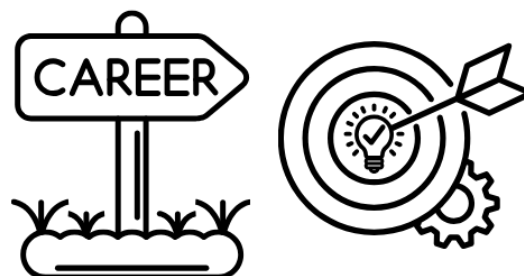
Together, these skill sets complement one another, creating well-rounded professionals who excel in both the technical and human aspects of their roles. To thrive in the modern workplace, invest in developing both your hard and soft skills to ensure success in any professional environment. Remote work amplifies the importance of skills like digital communication, self-management, and virtual collaboration. Emotional intelligence helps employees build meaningful professional relationships and resolve conflicts in diverse environments.

CAREER GOAL SETTING

Setting clear, actionable career goals is critical for navigating a rapidly changing job market. Research demonstrates that individuals who document their goals and create plans to achieve them are significantly more successful in both professional and personal pursuits. The ability to align career objectives with broader lifestyle aspirations fosters a sustainable balance between work and life.

10 POWERFUL CAREER STRATEGIES

1. **Pursue lifelong learning** by enrolling in formal and informal educational opportunities.
2. **Leverage the Internet** to stay informed and relevant in your field.
3. **Strengthen communication** and interpersonal skills for team and leadership roles.
4. **Develop a flexible career plan** that adapts to changing circumstances.
5. **Build a robust professional network** to access opportunities and resources.
6. **Find a mentor** who can provide guidance and insights for career progression.
7. **Cultivate confidence** by recognizing your past achievements and strengths.
8. **Promote your accomplishments** to enhance visibility within and outside your organization.
9. **Incubate your talents** by working in environments that foster growth.
10. **Explore self-employment options**, such as consulting or contracting, to maximize autonomy.

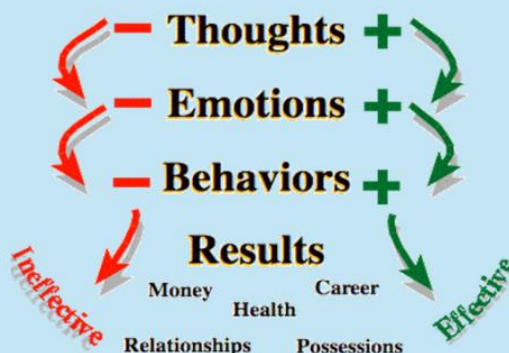


CHANGING BELIEFS

Overcoming limiting beliefs is crucial for career advancement. Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs) often reinforce outdated perspectives that hinder growth. Replacing these beliefs with positive, empowering alternatives can unlock new opportunities. Reflect on how your beliefs about your career serve you and consider strategies for reframing unhelpful narratives.

Your mind is a creature of habit. The more often we consciously focus on our new positive beliefs, the faster they will be taken into our subconscious mind and replace our old limiting beliefs!

Do a mental house-cleaning and get rid of those ANTs:



STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING BELIEFS

1. Listen to your language when describing who you are, your strengths, deficits and views of the world.

Labels, themes from stories, images and metaphors offer important clues to uncover and address your career beliefs directly.

2. Career beliefs may carry over from childhood and family experiences.

Remember phrases or sayings that were used by your family around work or leisure. What were the messages you received as a little boy or girl?

3. Become aware of your standards for performance – where do they come from (family, teachers, supervisors, colleagues)?

Do you feel pressured about their expectations?

4. Identify your beliefs and their potentially negative influences for career development.

For example: “I need to be perfect at a skill before applying for a job.”

This mindset may cause missed opportunities, delay career growth, and lead to self-doubt instead of gaining experience through learning on the job.

5. Review past accomplishments and failure experiences.

View “failure experiences” in a different light, looking for ways to help you attribute successes to your own efforts and “failure” experiences to luck and external attributes. Rename failures as learning experiences.

THE WALLET STRATEGY

The “Wallet Strategy” is a concept introduced by Dr. Lois P. Frankel in her work on personal and professional development, particularly in her book *Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office*.

The strategy is designed to help individuals, especially women, gain more control and authority in conversations and situations where they may feel undervalued or overlooked.

What is the Wallet Strategy?

The strategy is named after the physical act of carrying a wallet, symbolizing self-sufficiency, preparedness, and control.

In many traditional settings, women were often associated with carrying a purse, which might signify dependence or nurturing roles (e.g., holding others' belongings).

By “carrying the wallet,” individuals signal a mindset of independence, authority, and readiness to take action.

DEFINING AND MARKETING YOURSELF AS A BRAND

W – Work Prepared

READY

- Always come equipped with the necessary knowledge, tools, and confidence. Preparation signals authority and readiness to contribute meaningfully to discussions or decisions.
- Example: Bring relevant data, notes, or materials to every meeting or negotiation.

A – Assert Yourself



- Speak clearly and confidently. Avoid phrases that weaken your position, such as "I think" or "I'm not sure." Own your ideas and contributions.
- Example: Instead of saying, "I think this might work," say, "This approach works because of X, Y, and Z."

L – Leverage Your Presence



- Use body language and physical presence to convey authority. Take up space at the table, make eye contact, and avoid nervous habits.
- Example: Place your materials visibly on the table and sit upright to project confidence.

L – Lead Early



- Speak up early in discussions to set the tone and establish your presence. This positions you as a proactive contributor rather than a passive participant.
- Example: Start the meeting by sharing a key insight or asking a strategic question.

E – Establish Boundaries



- Be clear about what you will and won't accept. Use this to manage expectations and focus on tasks that align with your goals.
- Example: Politely but firmly decline tasks outside your scope: "Thank you, but that isn't within my role. Let me suggest someone else who can assist."

T – Take Control



- Take ownership of your contributions, actions, and decisions. Don't defer to others unnecessarily or wait for permission to lead.
- Example: If a discussion veers off-track, steer it back: "That's an interesting point, but let's refocus on the agenda to stay productive."

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and influence emotions—both in yourself and in others. It is a critical skill for building strong relationships, navigating social complexities, and making informed decisions.

Emotional intelligence is often divided into five key components, which were popularized by psychologist Daniel Goleman:

1. Self-Awareness



- Recognizing and understanding your own emotions and how they affect your thoughts, behaviour, and interactions with others.
- Example: Realizing that you're feeling stressed before a meeting and taking steps to stay calm and focused.

2. Self-Regulation



- Controlling impulsive emotions and behaviours, maintaining self-control, and adapting to changing circumstances.
- Example: Staying calm and professional when a customer raises a complaint instead of reacting defensively.

3. Motivation



- Harnessing emotions to stay committed to goals, take initiative, and maintain a positive outlook even in challenging situations.
- Example: Persisting through a difficult project because you're focused on achieving the end result.

4. Empathy



- Understanding and sharing the feelings of others, which helps build trust and strong relationships.
- Example: Noticing a coworker seems overwhelmed and offering to help with their workload.

5. Social Skills



- Building and maintaining positive relationships, communicating effectively, and resolving conflicts diplomatically.
- Example: Mediating a disagreement between team members to foster collaboration and harmony.



WHY EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IMPORTANT

- **Stronger Relationships:** Helps you connect with others on a deeper level, both personally and professionally.
- **Improved Communication:** Makes it easier to convey your thoughts and understand others' perspectives.
- **Better Leadership:** Enables you to inspire and guide teams effectively while managing conflicts constructively.
- **Increased Resilience:** Helps you stay composed and adaptable in the face of challenges or stress.
- **Career Success:** Emotional intelligence is often seen as a critical factor in workplace performance and leadership potential.



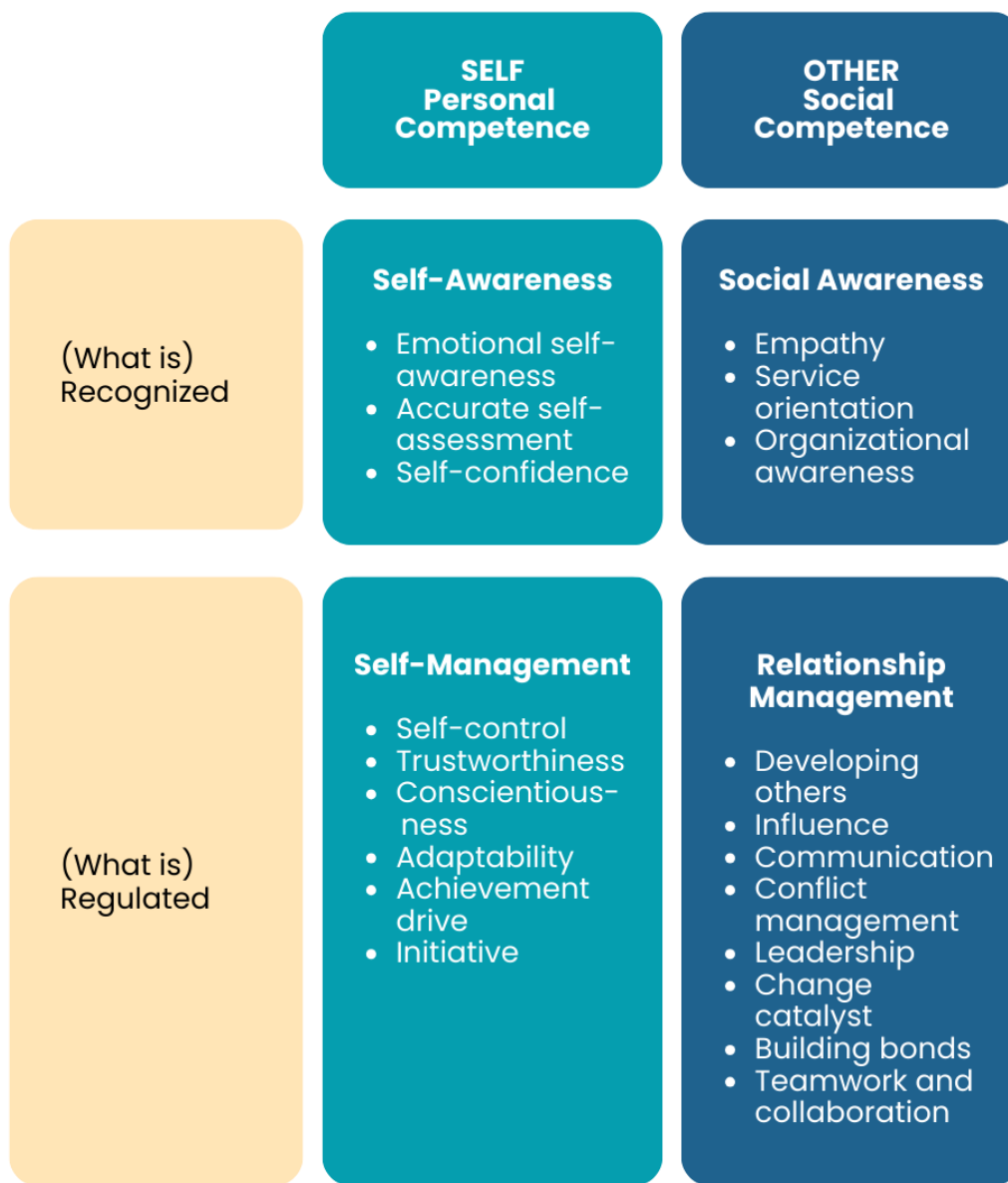
HOW TO IMPROVE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- **Practice Self-Awareness:** Reflect on your emotions and behaviours to understand their impact on others.
- **Manage Stress:** Develop techniques to stay calm under pressure, such as mindfulness or breathing exercises.
- **Develop Empathy:** Actively listen to others and consider their perspectives without judgment.
- **Improve Communication Skills:** Focus on clear, respectful, and constructive interactions.
- **Seek Feedback:** Ask for input from others to identify areas for improvement in emotional and interpersonal skills.

Emotional intelligence is a skill that can be developed and refined over time, making it a powerful tool for personal and professional growth.



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Adapted from the book, *The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace*,
Edited by Cary Cherniss and Daniel Goleman, 2000

LOCUS OF CONTROL

To successfully manage your career, you need to be aware of what you can and cannot control.

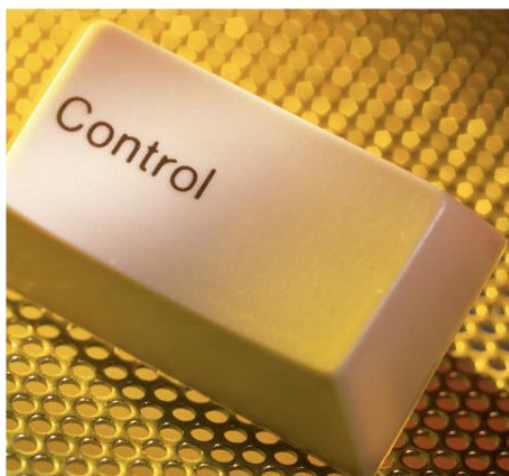
This exercise will help give you a perspective of what you can and cannot control as you manage your career.

The consequences of putting energy into things over which you have no control include:

- Stress
- Frustration
- Lack of results

The consequences of putting energy into the things you can control can include:

- Satisfaction
- Positive results
- Reduced stress



OUR BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

According to “Choice Theory” our behaviour is directed by the need to fulfil the four basic psychological needs, identified by Dr. William Glasser in the 1960’s. Glasser classified people’s needs under four headings:

A need for:

• Power



— includes achievement, prestige and feeling worthwhile as well as winning

• Love and belonging



— these include being recognized, respected and belonging to groups as well as families or loved ones)

• Freedom



— includes independence, autonomy, your own “space”

• Fun



— pursuit of pleasure

TIPS TO BUILD YOUR CAREER

Here are some concrete suggestions and tips to make cross-gender communications work for both men and women, by business communication strategist, Rosalind Sedacca from her article "Helping Business Women Bridge the Gender Communication Gap," July 2002.

- 1. Speak with authority.** Men generally speak more assertively than women. Women should avoid raising their voices in a questioning tone at the end of sentences. When your voice goes up, your credibility goes down.
- 2. Do not wait your turn in meetings.** If you have an appropriate comment, state it without waiting to be called.
- 3. Be aware of listening style differences.** Women listen attentively with direct eye contact, nodding, vocalizing and tilting their head. Men often misconstrue this to mean agreement. Women should be clear in expressing "I hear you" versus "I agree with you". Monitor your smiling. Women smile more readily in business contexts to be friendly. Men smile with women to flirt. Women should be careful their behaviour is not misinterpreted.

*"If you think you can, you can.
And if you think you can't,
you're right."*

— Henry Ford

WHAT IS CONFIDENCE?

This can be difficult to answer. The word comes from the Latin to mean "to put one's trust in someone" - that someone being ourselves. But this definition doesn't tell us how confidence manifests itself (or not) or how you can get it.

Countless studies show that people are attracted to others with confidence and high self-esteem. If a man or a woman genuinely believes in themselves - not with the arrogance of uncertainty, but with a calm inner security - people are drawn to him or her like a magnet!



THE CONFIDENCE CHECKLIST

How then is confidence — real confidence — demonstrated? Here is a 10-point checklist:

- ✓ 1. People who believe in themselves take charge of their actions.
- ✓ 2. They act assertively, speak calmly and listen properly.
- ✓ 3. They're flexible towards people, circumstances and all things new.
- ✓ 4. They're able to give genuine praise and to accept constructive criticism.
- ✓ 5. They evaluate themselves realistically.
- ✓ 6. They appreciate their achievements
- ✓ 7. They learn from their mistakes.
- ✓ 8. They aren't run by 'shoulds', 'musts' and 'ought tos'.
- ✓ 9. When an opportunity comes up they say 'Why not?' rather than 'Why?'
- ✓ 10. They feel they can influence situations and outcomes.



How do we acquire confidence?

Where exactly does all this come from? Are we born with it? Are we socialized into it?

“Yes, and yes,” according to psychologist Gary Fitzgibbons. “Confidence is within all of us, but whether it shines through or whether it remains hidden can depend on how we are treated as children and young adults.” It's not for nothing that people say “show me the boy (or girl) at seven and I'll show you the man (or woman)”.

Of course, people, like life itself, can change. And if you want to feel more confident, the starting point is with some serious self-reflection.

The following are some important factors that have been shown by research to increase your self-image and thereby your self-confidence for career success.

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- **Past success in similar situations.**

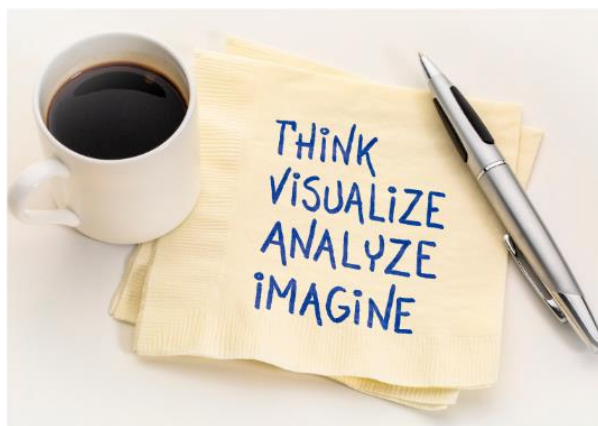
The more experience and success we have achieved in similar situations, the more confident we will tend to feel. If we have a poor track record or lack experience, then we will feel less confident.

- **Challenging standards or criteria for success.**

Our standards or expectations may be too high considering factors such as the difficulty of the task, our level of experience, our relevant skills, our mental state, or the level of our competition. Standards that are too high or too low will either undermine our confidence or cause us to be over-confident.

- **Others' expectations and input.**

What others say can also affect our self-image and our confidence, especially if we are young and inexperienced in this area, or more externally controlled. It is also important to observe how we let other people affect us. Do you feel more or less self-worth or self confidence after talking with a certain person or being in a certain group? One simple way to learn to become more confident is to spend more time with people who help you feel better about yourself and less time with those who don't.



- **Visualizing success.** Visualizing ourselves successfully performing some task and reaching a successful outcome can help us overcome mental barriers to success.

- **Mental practice increases success.**

In controlled experiments, students in Australia who had never shot a basketball used mental imagery to learn how to shoot baskets. During later tests, those only using imagery shot as accurately as students who practiced shooting real basketballs. In other controlled experiments, people learned to increase communication skills by mental role-playing. If you haven't pictured reaching an important goal or imagining what it would be like, develop a mental image of it. Start fantasizing about the goal state just for fun.



WHAT STOPS YOU FROM BEING CONFIDENT?

- Negative early messages that you weren't loved, particularly from parents or guardians, can leave you with a deep-rooted and unshakeable belief that you're worthless.
- Childhood trauma, especially if you were abused, very ill or separated from your parents for a while, can cut across the natural development of your self-esteem and leave you "stuck" at that unconfident stage.
- Bad treatment from childhood friends — maybe being bullied — can mean you're nervous of other people and end up not trusting anyone — even yourself.
- A major shake-up in adult life — a relationship break-up, career setback, even becoming a parent or turning 30 — can dent your normal confidence and spiral you into self-doubt.
- Depression, which can be caused by imbalanced brain chemicals, can also result in low self-esteem. This is a vicious cycle because lowered self-esteem can then be caused by depression.



The "Imposter Syndrome" – A Confidence Barrier

Imposter syndrome can be defined as a collection of feelings of inadequacy that persist even in face of information to the contrary. It is experienced internally as chronic self-doubt, and feelings of intellectual fraudulence.

It is basically feeling that you are not really a successful, competent, and smart, that you are only posing as such.

Some common feelings and thoughts that might characterize the imposter syndrome are: "I feel like a phony" "My colleagues/manager etc. are going to find out I don't really belong here," "The selection panel must have made a mistake".

Your ticket to employment

The imposter feelings can be divided into three sub-categories:

1. Feeling like a phony: the belief that you do not deserve your success or professional position and that somehow other have been deceived into thinking otherwise. This goes together with a fear of being, “found out”, discovered or “unmasked”. People who feel this way would identify with statements such as, “I can give the impression that I am more competent than I really am” or “I am often afraid that others will discover how much knowledge I really lack”.

2. Attributing success to luck: Another aspect of the imposter syndrome is the tendency to attribute success to luck or to other external reasons and not to your own internal abilities. Someone with such feeling would refer to an achievement by saying, “I just got lucky this time” or “It was a fluke” and with fear that they will not be able to succeed the next time.

3. Discounting success: The third aspect is a tendency to downplay success and discount it. There is also often difficulty accepting compliments. One with such feelings would discount an achievement by saying, “It’s not such a big deal” or “It was not important.” One example of this is discounting a career promotion, which is really a big success. Or saying, “I did well because it is an easy job, etc.”



This is not an all-or-nothing syndrome. You could probably identify with a few statements but not with others. Some people may identify with imposter feelings in some situations and not in others, or maybe you may not identify with these feelings but have friends who do.

Who Is Likely to Have the Imposter Syndrome?

The imposter syndrome is associated with highly achieving, highly successful people. This makes imposter feelings somewhat different from the concept of “low self-esteem” because there is a discrepancy between the actual achievement and the person’s feelings about the achievement that may not be present in low self-esteem. People in different professions such as teachers, people in the social sciences, people in academia, actresses and actors, may all have imposter feelings.

Your ticket to employment

The imposter syndrome was originally associated with women but recent research indicated that men suffer in similar numbers.

Attitudes, beliefs, direct or indirect messages that we received from our parents or from other significant people in our lives early on may have contributed to the development of imposter feelings. Certain family situations and dynamics tend to contribute to imposter feelings: when the success and career aspirations conflict with the family expectations of the gender, race, religion, or age of the person, families who impose unrealistic standards, families who are very critical, and families who are ridden with conflict and anger.

Some researchers identify two main types of family dynamics that can contribute to imposter feelings, although there may be others.

1. Family Labels: Different children in a family may be identified or labelled differently. For example, some families have one “intelligent” child and one “sensitive” child. While growing up, many times families will not change their perception of each child, no matter what that child does. Therefore, the sensitive child, even if they get better grades or more awards, may not be recognized for their intelligence. This can lead to doubting their intelligence and believing the family is correct even with evidence, which contradicts these labels.



2. Family messages of superiority:

Other families can give their child full support to the point where the family and child believe that they are superior or perfect. As the young person grows up and encounters challenging tasks, he or she may begin to doubt their parent’s perceptions and may also need to hide his or her difficulties in order not to disturb the family image of them. As a result of these normal difficulties, this young person may come to believe that they are only average and even below average.

Dealing with Imposter Feelings

If you have imposter feelings, it does not mean that you are stuck with it forever. There are steps that you can take to reduce those feelings and to cope with them when they do come up.

Your ticket to employment

- **Support:** Being able to discuss those feelings with others in order to understand that you are not alone and to get a reality check. This may be something to discuss with your mentor.
- **Identify those feelings:** Be aware when you engage in thoughts and feelings of imposter-ness. Awareness is the first step to change.
- **Programmed thoughts:** Programmed thoughts can be defined as underlying, unquestioned thoughts, which affect how you perceive an event or situation. These thoughts are often so embedded that they occur very fast and you may not even notice them but they are affecting your perception. An example of a programmed thought related to imposter syndrome would be: "I am not good enough." This underlying thought may lead to thinking such things as: "Everyone else is smarter than me" or "The selection panel made a mistake."
- **Do your own reality check:** Question these programmed imposter thoughts and feelings and try to come up with more balanced thoughts.



- **Understanding the difference between feelings and reality:** Some people tend to believe that if they feel something strongly, it must be right. "If I feel so stupid, it must be that I am stupid." When you catch yourself thinking in this way, change it to a coping statement of: "The fact that I feel stupid does not mean that I really am."

"What you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."
— Goethe

THE BOYATZI MODEL

The Boyatzi model provides a framework for self-development. It requires a good deal of self-awareness to identify the gaps and overlaps between the real and ideal selves.



Adapted from Boyatzis's Theory of Self-Directed Learning

CREATING YOUR IDEAL SELF

Studies show that it's possible to change your behaviour, moods and self-image. What studies also show is that adults only learn what they want to learn. This means that most (if not all) sustainable behavioural change is intentional.

According to Boyatzis, "Self-directed change is an intentional change in an aspect of who you are (i.e., the "real") or who you want to be (i.e., the "ideal") or both."

Self-directed learning is self-directed change in which you are aware of the change and understand the process of change as shown in the model.



APPENDIX

Examples of Hard Skills

Technical Skills	
Computer programming	Python, Java, C++
Data analysis and visualization	Excel, Tableau, Power BI
Web development	HTML, CSS, JavaScript
Cybersecurity and information security	
Cloud computing	AWS, Azure, Google Cloud
Software engineering	
Database management	SQL, MongoDB
Mobile app development	
IT networking and troubleshooting	
Business and Management Skills	
Financial modelling and forecasting	
Market research and analysis	
Business strategy development	
Project management	Agile, Scrum, PMP certification
Budgeting and cost control	
Supply chain management	
Risk assessment and management	
Marketing and Sales Skills	
Search engine optimization (SEO)	
Social media marketing and management	
Digital advertising	Google Ads, Facebook Ads
Content marketing and copywriting	
Email marketing	Mailchimp, Constant Contact
CRM management	Salesforce, HubSpot, Zoho
Analytics tools	Google Analytics
Sales negotiation and closing techniques	
Design and Creative Skills	
Graphic design	Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator
Video editing	Adobe Premiere, Final Cut Pro
UX/UI design	Figma, Sketch
Photography and photo editing	
3D modelling and animation	Blender, Maya
Game design and development	
Language and Communication Skills	
Proficiency in multiple languages	Spanish, French, Mandarin
Technical writing and documentation	
Public speaking and presentation skills	
Academic writing	
Editing and proofreading	

Engineering and Manufacturing Skills	
CAD software	AutoCAD, SolidWorks
Robotics programming and operation	
Lean manufacturing principles	
Welding and fabrication	
Electrical circuit design and troubleshooting	
Healthcare and Medical Skills	
Electronic health records	(EHR) management
Patient care techniques	
Laboratory testing and analysis	
Medical coding and billing	ICD-10, CPT
Pharmaceutical knowledge	
Analytical and Research Skills	
Statistical analysis	SPSS, R, SAS
Survey design and implementation	
Experimental design	
Predictive modelling and machine learning	
Market trend forecasting	
Administrative and Clerical Skills	
Typing and data entry	
Calendar and schedule management	
Office software proficiency	Microsoft Office Suite
Recordkeeping and filing systems	
Travel planning and coordination	
Education and Training Skills	
Curriculum development	
Classroom management	
E-learning)	Moodle, Blackboard
Instructional design	
Test preparation and grading	
Trades and Skilled Labor	
Plumbing and HVAC repair	
Carpentry and woodworking	
Heavy equipment operation	
Automotive repair and diagnostics	
Electrical installations	

Examples of Soft Skills

Soft skills are personal and interpersonal abilities that enhance communication, collaboration, and adaptability in the workplace.

Personal Skills	
Self-Awareness	Understanding your emotions, strengths, and weaknesses.
Self-Management	Managing emotions, staying calm under pressure, and maintaining focus.
Adaptability	Adjusting to new environments, tasks, or challenges.
Resilience	Recovering quickly from setbacks or difficulties.
Time Management	Using your time effectively to balance tasks and responsibilities.
Creativity	Thinking outside the box and generating innovative ideas.
Initiative	Taking action without being prompted.
Work Ethic	Demonstrating dedication, responsibility, and dependability
Interpersonal Skills	
Communication	Conveying ideas clearly and listening effectively.
Empathy	Understanding and sharing the feelings of others.
Conflict Resolution	Addressing and resolving disputes constructively.
Collaboration	Working effectively with others toward a common goal.
Teamwork.	Contributing to team success by cooperating and respecting others.
Cultural Competence	Understanding and respecting diverse perspectives and backgrounds.
Negotiation	Finding mutually beneficial solutions in discussions or conflicts.
Leadership Skills	
Emotional Intelligence	Recognizing and managing emotions in yourself and others.
Motivation	Inspiring yourself and others to achieve goals.
Decision-Making	Evaluating information to make sound judgments.
Delegation	Assigning tasks effectively while maintaining accountability.
Mentorship	Guiding and supporting others in their professional development.
Professional Skills	
Problem-Solving	Identifying issues and finding effective solutions.
Critical Thinking	Analyzing information and evaluating options objectively.
Attention to Detail	Ensuring accuracy and thoroughness in tasks.
Professionalism	Demonstrating courtesy, respect, and a positive attitude in all interactions.
Flexibility	Willingness to adapt to new roles, responsibilities, or circumstances.

NEXT STEPS

Now that you have finished reading this Learner Guide, follow these steps to continue your learning:

Complete Your Action Plan

Refer to your journal and document your key takeaways.

Outline how you will apply this knowledge in practice.

Prepare for the Knowledge Exam

Review the exam section to understand the format and expectations.

Ensure you have covered all key concepts before attempting the exam.

Complete the Practical Exam Tasks

Refer to the practical exam section for task instructions.

Follow the guidelines to demonstrate your skills effectively.

If you have any questions, refer back to the manual or seek assistance from your trainer.