



# Career Synergy

## PPCD Career Workbook

### 6 Exercises For Your Development

By Peter Fennah

#### Introduction

This short guide includes a range of exercises designed to enhance your self and contextual awareness. Insights from the exercises can be used to refocus your development.

It is worth remembering that success in your career results from your ability to build relationship bridges between your own recognised needs, your stakeholders' and the needs of the wider business environment.

*"It is not the strongest of the species that survive nor the most intelligent, but the most responsive to change."* Charles Darwin

Each time you make a change of: job; responsibility level; function/sector or culture it is likely to present new challenges that can create unexpected demands upon you as a person, professional and take you to new career opportunities. Your ability to recognise these transitional challenges and adapt will largely determine your personal satisfaction in the new role.

Developing relationships (e.g. partners, friends, mentors, Action Learning Set colleagues, coaches, mentors, managers, etc.) that provide both support and challenge will greatly assist your preparation and transition. You may wish to '*dig (this) well before you are thirsty*' by considering who else you can call upon to support your ongoing development.

To assist you this assignment requires you to actively discuss each exercise with a member of your Action Learning Set / Group. You may like to record key observations in your Reflective Log book.

The exercises contained here provide reflective opportunities to identify what is *really* important to you. Keeping focus upon what has meaning for you is particularly helpful in time poor, complex and uncertain times.

Additional exercises and support are available through the Global Career Service Portal. Details are described briefly after each section of this workbook.

*"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did. So, throw off the bowlines! Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails.*

*Explore... Dream...Discover!"* Mark Twain

## Values

### So, who am I? Who do I want to be?

- Purpose**
- Having a defined sense of self helps you to make choices and deal with set-backs. It also allows others to understand what you stand for, helping them to collaborate with you.
  - Your core values are the best predictor of your cultural fit within teams, business units and organisations.

## Exercise 1: Career Anchors

Edgar Schien conducted longitudinal research of MBAs to investigate how they chose successful career paths.

***"Most of us are not aware of career anchors until forced to make choices pertaining to self-development, family or career."*** Schein

A career anchor is a combination of your perceived ability, basic values and motives, which shape your career. Gaining clarity of your key anchors can be helpful in considering your next job role. Read through the shortened descriptions of each career anchor on the next page.

- What are your top 1-3 anchors and why?

#### Stop and think:

- How have you experienced situations where these anchors were aligned to your work?
- In which situations have these anchors been challenged? How did it make you feel?
- Consider how these anchors are appreciated, recognised, rewarded and prioritised in the delivery of successful performance by those who you value, and those who have influence upon your career. How aware are they of your values?

<b>Career Anchors</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Rating1-9</b>
<b>Technical / Functional Competence</b>	Exercising expertise of skills and knowledge often in one particular field, education & retraining within a changing technological world.	
<b>General Managerial Competence</b>	To co-ordinate the work of others. Not technical/functional. Increasingly political environments. Highly consequential decisions. Interpersonal skills in teams and negotiations.	
<b>Autonomy / Independence</b>	The desire to keep as free as possible from organisational rules and restrictions by setting my own agenda.	
<b>Sense of Service</b>	To be helpful to others, often the undeveloped world, e.g. environment, health & welfare, race and religion.	
<b>Pure Challenge</b>	You seek: variety; novelty; to surmount impossible odds. Active learners.	
<b>Life Style Integration</b>	Organisation provides entertainment. Childcare, job sharing. Concern for oneself. You seek integration of your life.	
<b>Entrepreneurship</b>	Your main concern is to create something new, to engage in your own new venture within a friendly economic, political, cultural environment.	
<b>Security / Stability</b>	Dependence on oneself. Employability. Opportunity to learn. The attainment of financial security &, or, geographical stability.	
<b>Internationalism</b>	To travel and gain a broader experience of work across different cultures.	

(Adapted from Edgar Schien's Career Anchors based upon his more recent papers & presentations.)

Try "CareerLeader", the business skills, business motivators (work values) and business interests MBA careers exercise found on the Global Careers Service Portal. CareerLeader can be found in the Self-Evaluation section of the Portal. Pay particular attention to the work values results and the Career Anchors review. If you have full access to the Global Careers Service, take a look also at the Career Matching section and try the Work Values and Career Anchors exercises.

### **Stop and think:**

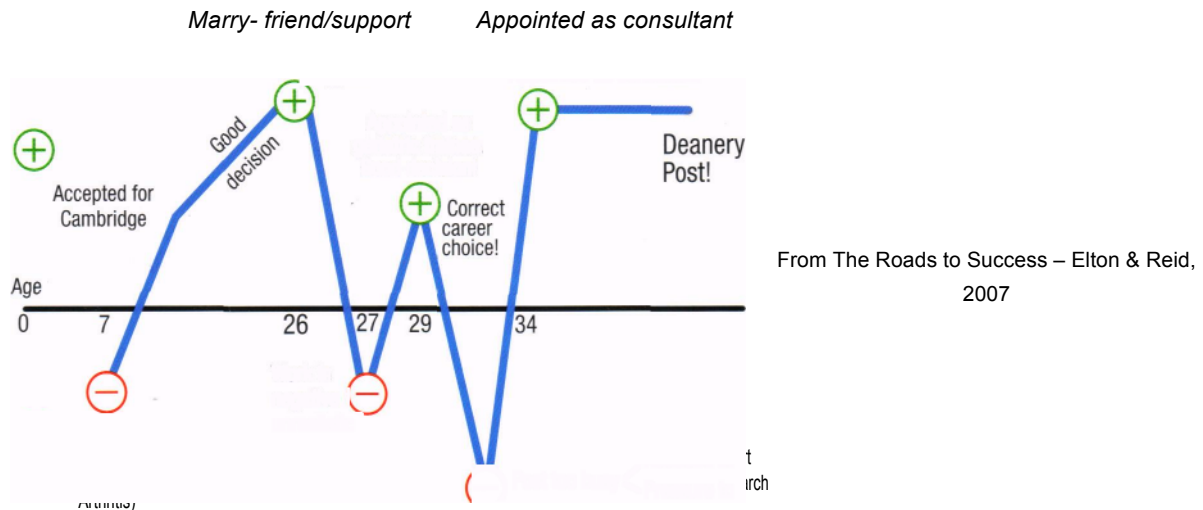
How do these anchors manifest themselves in:

- *Your approach to work?*
- *How you make decisions?*
- *How you see others and your role in relation to them?*
- *How you connect with the organisation and its systems?*
- *Where you seek to invest your time and in what areas you attend to less?*
- *What do you seek to take with you when you move on from a job?*
- *What would you be most reluctant to sacrifice if asked to change?*
- *What anchors are valued in your ideal next or longer-term role?*

## Exercise 2: Draw Your Lifeline

Draw your life to date. OR using three columns write the positive, neutral & negative life events that have happened to you denoting the key ages that they occurred. An example is contained below.

Figure 1: Lifeline example from a consultant



### Instructions:

1. Take a sheet of paper (ideally A3 or flip-chart paper. But A4 will work if it is all that is available). Turn it round so that it is 'landscape' rather than 'portrait'.
2. Draw a horizontal line across the middle of the paper. Note down your age at the right-hand end of the line. Then, put in a 'plus' (+) above the horizontal line (to signify times that you look back on with pleasure) and a 'minus' (-) below the line (to signify those times when things were not going well).
3. Before you go any further, think very carefully about the course the line will take. Where are the high points and the low points? Which parts of the line (if any) are relatively stable?
4. Now mark in the significant life events. Include experiences which influenced your achievements, and both good and bad events that have occurred in your life to date. Allow yourself sufficient space, as including one event may trigger a memory of another.
5. Connect up the points that you have marked.
6. Identify a couple of decisions that you have marked on your Lifeline which you feel (in retrospect) have worked out well. What made them good decisions? How did you go about making these particular decisions?
7. Now, identify a couple of decisions on your lifeline that you feel (in retrospect) didn't work out so well? What made them poorer decisions? How did you approach these decisions that didn't work out so well?
8. A much-favoured adage of psychologists is that the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. Bearing this in mind, can you use this analysis of decisions to throw any light on how you should approach the career choices that you are currently facing?

9. One way of doing this is to look at your answers to questions 6 and 7 in order to identify the best way for you to approach your current decision, as well as approaches you should avoid. For example, do you seem to be somebody who makes good decisions when you rely on your 'gut' feelings, or are you somebody who has made your best decisions when you adopt a more structured approach? Alternatively have you allowed events to shape your decisions for you?
10. Has anything else struck you from completing this Lifeline exercise? You may find it helpful to share this exercise and describe it to a trusted friend.

## Exercise 3: Wheels of Life – Now & Future

This exercise helps to identify where you spend your time currently and allows you to compare this to what you would ideally like for the future. The contrast between 'current' and 'future' images gives focus to what is working in your life and any areas that are less satisfactory.

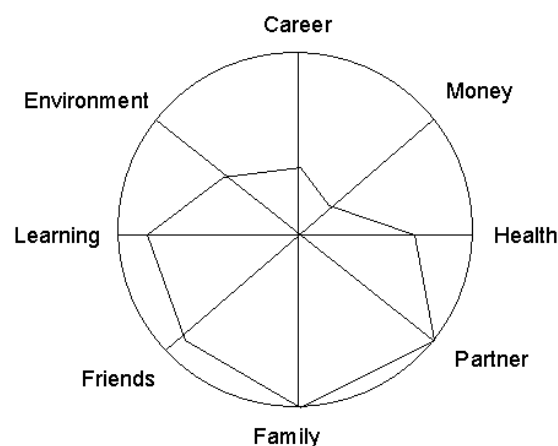
Consider your life as a wheel with a varied number of spokes radiating from the central hub. Draw out the various strands or spokes of your life as it is now. You can indicate the importance of each spoke by changing its length and assigning it a value of 1-10.

Example spokes could include: Challenge, family, money, spirituality, friends, learning, status, children, fun, risk, safety, health, partner, recognition, power, autonomy, responsibility, charity, creativity, problem solving, team work, hobbies, own business, or any other way that you spend your time and energy on.

*Once you have completed this you can then draw a second wheel with the same or different spokes in order to reflect your life as you would like it to be in the future. Be realistic, you will still have 24 hours to your day.*

- *You may wish to consider how satisfied you are with the strands or spokes to your life.*
- *Is there anything missing?*
- *How comfortable are you with the relative length of each spoke?*
- *When stepping back from the image what themes come through for you?*
- *How are you able to create & maintain these commitments?*
- *Where are you stretching or growing and what needs to change in order for this to occur?*

*Wheel of Life, e.g.*



## Exercise 4: Wheel of Work

You can complete the same exercise with a focus upon how you are at work *now*. Consider up to about 10 things that are most important to you at work.

Example spokes could include: task focus; people focus; relationships with customers, team, boss, peers; analysis; presentations; networking; communication; reflection time; confidence; delegation; leadership; feedback; support; direction; coaching; creativity; negotiation; travel; handling conflict; budgets, profit, loss; planning; project management; tactics, strategy; reactive/proactive; handling complexity/uncertainty; systems; achievement, etc.

Again, you can draw another wheel to highlight what you would like to do more of in your *future*.

- Stand back and consider what is missing?
- What would be required for your definition of success in your current/future role?
- How satisfied are you with the strands or spokes to your life at work?
- Is there anything missing relating back to what defines who you are as a person?
- How comfortable are you with the relative length of each spoke?
- When stepping back from the image what themes come through for you?

You can create an electronic Wheel of Life and Wheel of Work by taking the “Life Balance” exercise on the Global Careers Service Portal. You can find this in the Self-Evaluation section of the Portal.

## Exercise 5: Strengths Exercise

*“...One cannot build on weakness. To achieve results, one has to use all the available strengths...These strengths are the true opportunities.”* Drucker, 1967

### What are strengths?

Strengths are natural capacities that:

- we yearn (love) to use
- enable authentic expression
- energise us

Govindji and Linley, 2007

A strength is “a natural capacity for behaving, thinking or feeling in a way that allows optimal functioning and performance in the pursuit of valued outcomes” Linley and Harrington, 2006

The purpose of this exercise is to identify from your past achievements the strengths that underpin your success.

1. List the core strengths that you are aware of:

My Strengths As I Perceive Them	Strengths Others See In Me
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	
Etc...	Etc...

We can lose perspective around areas of strength if we, or others, take them for granted, e.g. in operating in specialised environments or functions.

To take a deeper look at your strengths consider asking others to identify your key strengths as they perceive them in different situations or environments.

- What patterns, themes, levels or areas of application can be used to categorise your strengths? *(If asked...E.g. People, Analysis, Tasks, Customer Focus, Strategic, Shaping, Co-ordinating, Logical, Empathetic, Operational, Managerial, Senior management, Project Management, etc.)*

The Global Careers Service exercise, CareerLeader, will allow you to evaluate your skills. If you have full access to GCS, you might also like to look in the Self-Marketing section of the Portal and try the exercises: Skills Audit and Personal Competencies.

## Exercise 6: Integration - How well do you know yourself?

### Action Learning Set Colleague Discussion

It can be helpful to produce a combined summary of what you value, your motivations (from the wheels of life & work) and those strengths that energise you.

- **Present this to ONE action learning set colleague with whom you can have a confidential discussion. Seek to summarise your work on the previous exercises by highlighting the insights about you as a person. You have 4 minutes per person to do this.**

The purpose of this summary is to lay the foundation of what is at the core of your current story of who you are and what you are motivated to do going forwards. It can be helpful to return to this, like a castle, when faced with challenging times or competing demands. In this way you can focus upon what is important to you and make decisions based upon core values, strengths and the areas that you are motivated to improve going forwards.

In order to learn from this, be clear about what de-motivates you. In this way you can look out for these factors and seek to manage them as they arise in the future. You may find the table below helpful to summarise your work so far.

My Values & Strong Beliefs	What Motivates Me to adapt	My Strengths	What De-Motivates Me

Your action learning set may have questions to understand your presentation and to facilitate your own awareness.

Here are a host of possible questions designed to challenge you. The answers you give can help define and refocus who you are and would like to be. Work through these questions, and others that evolve from your discussion with your Action Learning Set colleagues.

- Give your colleague time to answer the really hard questions
- Listen deeply and probe in a respectful, supportive yet challenging manner
- Take time to summarise the discussion and explore the patterns and insights that result
- Encourage them to make sense of the data. Inspire them to be proactive and ask the “So, what will you do with this understanding of yourself now?”

### Example questions:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do you identify as important in your life?</li><li>• If you were to leave work what would be missed by those who know you well?</li><li>• What values, attributes, talents and strengths define you?</li><li>• What more are you than this list?</li><li>• What really defines you?</li><li>• What would others say about who you are?</li><li>• What competencies (skills, knowledge, abilities, qualities and other characteristics) begin to define you?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do you learn, contribute, manage, lead, inspire others, etc.?</li><li>• What are you passionate about?</li><li>• What are the competing commitments that are stopping you from reaching your potential?</li><li>• What do you need to do differently?</li><li>• What are the benefits to you in changing?</li><li>• What will it take for you to commit ...fully to becoming the best that you can be?</li></ul>
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Consider what is at the centre of your life currently? When faced with difficult decisions, what have you protected and what have you sacrificed? For example, do you compromise having fun with others in order to work or to make more money? Do you place your family or spouse at the centre of your life and make sacrifices at work, and elsewhere, to spend time with them? There will be a range of commitments that are important to you, try and focus on what your behaviours would indicate as occupying the most time, effort or energy for you. This may help you to consider where your current focus is located.

Bringing the values, beliefs, motivating factors and awareness of what de-motivates you together in a written statement can be a helpful capture of your learning so far. Taking time to integrate or interpret what you have learnt so far and any areas that you have as yet to gain clarity on will be helpful to identify here.

### Summary

Recognition of changing energy levels and importance is important for your ongoing development over time. People fall out of love with their career and get worn down by the daily grind of bureaucracy. With most of the MBAs they have a driving, ambitious energy but have as yet to clearly define their ambition for both themselves and for the business that they would seek to work with. As time progresses the driving energy can lesson through life stage changes and consequently growth progress can lesson.

## 12 Steps To Sustaining Personal Change

*“Change is the essence of life. Be willing to surrender what you are for what you could become.” Ghandi.*

Alternatively, *“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” Reinhold Niebuhr*

1. Set yourself a clear goal or objective
2. Identify the key competency that play the most significant role in taking you to your objective
3. Identify the range of behaviours that relate to this competency and consider which behaviour, that when changed, would bring you the greatest success
4. Understand why this change of behaviour would be of benefit to you, to your career, to your happiness, etc?
5. Benchmark your current performance of this behaviour. How do you demonstrate this behaviour now?
6. What is the change of behaviour required? What would good or outstanding look like for this behaviour?
7. What action is required to ensure that this behaviour is changed? In what situations do you need to demonstrate this change?
8. What will be your measures of success as you move towards and then realise the behaviour change you require?
9. When do you need to demonstrate this change in behaviour? What will be the timings for the milestones of your behaviour change?
10. What obstacles might you face as you change your behaviour?
11. What support do you require from other people, etc. to help you initiate and sustain this change of behaviour?
12. Who do you need to share this change process with? What do you need to say to your supporters so that they can best help you to change?

Written by Peter Fennah Director of Career Synergy Ltd.

[www.careersynergy.com](http://www.careersynergy.com)

Peter has over 14 years experience coaching talent, designing & implementing assessment/development centres and career development programmes.

[peter@careersynergy.com](mailto:peter@careersynergy.com) +44 (0)7813 839 120

