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Group 1
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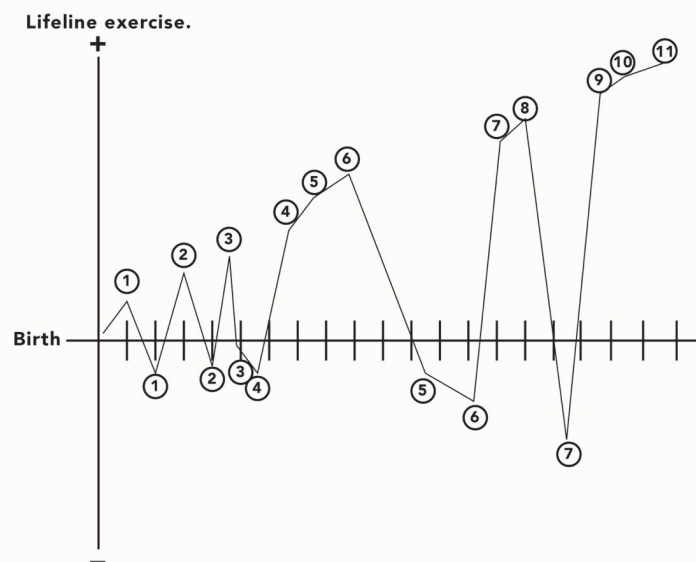


Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
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Introduction:

My name is Jana Lefevre, the purpose of this writing assignment is not only to reflect back on my personal career development thus far, but to also draw up a structured plan towards reaching my career goals.

In order to achieve the above task, I must first analyse the skills I have already developed through my years of employment in various sectors, but also through education and personal life experience. For this I am constructing a lifeline exercise. This exercise will provide me with the correct understanding of highs and lows in my career thus far. It will help me develop the insights I need to make key decisions about the future development of my career goals.



Positive experiences	Negative experiences
1. First summer job (mail delivery) at the age of 15. 2. Graduation from secondary school, being awarded my secondary school diploma in digital arts. 3. Passing my entrance exam for a bachelor course in civil law and real estate 4. Graduation from university and achieving a bachelor's degree in civil law and real estate 5. Securing a full-time permanent contract working as an administrative assistant in the health care sector 6. Moving into my own place 7. Moving to London 8. Being hired for my first job in London 9. Finding my current job and securing a permanent full-time contract. 10. My marriage 11. My first pregnancy	1. Fired from first summer job for not achieving to complete my deliveries on time. 2. Failing my university entrance exam for a bachelor's course in architectural design, having to choose a difference course. 3. Failing 3 out of 5 modules in my first year at university, having to resit during summer and take tutoring classes. 4. Failing to secure an internship at a real estate firm and having to settle for a temporary full-time employment in the health care sector. 5. Failing to move up in my career despite several attempts at promotions. 6. Giving up my job due to frustration and moving home due to unemployment 7. Resigning from my first job, to try at a better position in a different firm, failing to secure a permanent contract after 3-month probation. 'Causing unemployment again.

The conclusion I can draw from this lifeline exercise is that my perception of my career development so far hasn't been all that negative. Including the personal life developments, I have turned a lot of negative spikes to positive spikes. My personal perception of my career so far before completing this exercise was somewhat negative.

I personally feel I have dabbled in low-wage jobs for too long according to my age. I see a lot of peers owning their own business and doing well moving up in their careers. However, personally I feel I am somewhat stuck. Looking at the result of this exercise makes me realise that persistence is key to getting where you want, and baby steps might be more solid, and have a longer lasting effect, than big leaps would. I believe taking the step to get further educated in the UK in order to increase my chances of career progression was the first approach to improving my personal work situation.

2. Reflection

This module has taught us that self-reflection is a key component of determining why I feel like I am stuck in the same cycle of employment positions I am not entirely satisfied with, and to also get to the root of why I haven't achieved a desired career goal thus far.

Gibbs reflective model

As the Gibbs' reflective model is most familiar to me, I applied this to my personal situation in order to have a more of an in-depth look on my career lifeline to the present day.

Let's start with the Gibb's reflective cycle. Why I think this is a very useful model is because it helps you understand not only your own point of view, but also that of the other party. It encourages critical

and objective thinking to successfully reach a valuable conclusion. To give the model a little bit of a background story, Gibbs (1998) developed a model of reflection that contains 6 stages.

The model's main purpose is to get individuals to reflect back on events that happened to them, whether personal or in their careers, and determine why they keep happening and what could be done to resolve the issue in the next occurrence. The Gibbs' reflective model is divided up into 6 stages. You can find an example of a Gibbs' model applied on a personal level in appendix 2.

The first stage is the description. It describes what issue or concept in specific the person is reflecting on, the parties involved and what exactly happened.

The second stage is Feelings. This is where the author reflects on his or hers personal feelings, motive and thoughts during the event or occurrence.

The third stage is Evaluation. The purpose of this stage is to figure out the "why?". The cycle encourages to reflect back on those feelings and understand why they arose. What was negative and positive about the experience? Why did you and the other parties involved feel the way you did?

The fourth stage is Analysis, in this stage we try to get to the root of the problem. We try to analyse a pattern of negative behaviour by analysing the details given in the previous stages in order to try and break that behaviour and at the same time, break the cycle of negativity.

After analysing the situation, we arrive at **the fifth stage. Conclusion.** This is where you communicate the insights you

developed through the analysis-stage and draw up ideas on changes you could make to reach a different outcome next time. After all, in the words of Albert Einstein:

“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results.” – Albert Einstein

In order to reach those different results, we have to tackle our personal attitude and approach towards the situation once it presents itself again. This brings us to the last stage of the reflective cycle. The action plan. What will you do differently next time? How can I progress differently to develop the skills or certificates needed to reach my future goals?

Example of Gibbs’ reflective cycle applied to my personal situation

Description:

Throughout my mid to late twenties, I built up a certain frustration towards career progression. After being stuck doing low-level jobs that provide minimal income, I really want to progress and climb up in life. My aim is to increase my financial independence, run an independent business alongside my husband.

Feelings:

The first few years I had the motivation to increasingly try to apply for positions that were a slight step up from my current position, after several failed attempts I started feeling discouraged and unmotivated. My ultimate career goal requires a larger income to secure the

financial means needed to acquire the skills needed to reach that goal, and respectfully, to risk opening a small business. Not reaching that financial goal is causing a larger build-up of frustration and creeping sense of failure.

Evaluation:

After an initial number of failed attempts at being promoted to higher positions, the motivation to keep applying was lost. Following this I became increasingly comfortable in my current position and became fearful of another failure that I gave up trying in total. This is causing my financial situation to remain the same, leaving me unable to set money aside in order to achieve my financial projections. Having stability in a job is positive, however I possibly need to take a risk at some point in order to progress.

Analysis:

For a variety of reasons, I feel I have compromised my ambitions for stability/security in the workplace. The ambition to progress however is still very much present. I believe failing to satisfy that ambition, is having psychological consequences on myself. Reflecting on this issue sparked my interest and got me to research whether this was a reoccurring phenomenon for young professionals in a similar age group as my own. In doing so I learned about the “Gottfredson career theory of circumscription and compromise.” Gottfredson (2004) states that from a young age (between 3-5 years old) we start picking up occupational stereotypes from our environment. We class these specific occupations as acceptable according to characteristics such as: age, gender, social class, race, sexual preference, etc...

Through this stereotyping behaviour we subconsciously start setting standards for ourselves as to which professions are acceptable and which do not fit the narrative. This phenomenon of ruling out options based on our perception of societal acceptance, Gottfredson identified

Commented [JL(1): Linda Susanne Gottfredson (1947) is an American Psychology professor emeritus at the University of Delaware. She is also a co-director of the Delaware-Johns Hopkins Project for the Study of Intelligence and Society.

as “Circumscription”. The next stage of this phenomenon is called “Compromise”. This occurs once the individual starts to be inclined to turn down roles they see as more desirable, for roles that they perceive as more easily accessible.

Gottfredson’s theory felt incredibly familiar, if not almost completely made me realise why I did make the career choices I made thus far. I also believe the disappearance of job security in the workplace as a result of economic globalisation and socio-economic influences on the job-market or the constant restructuring of the workforces in companies through use of short-term contracts make it increasingly hard for working individuals to take risks. As a result of the decrease of job security, the individual is forced to make compromises in his or her decision making in order to see priorities such as basic human needs, housing and household bills being met.

Conclusion:

The age-old sentiment that we can be anything we desire to be might be lovely to hear, but in reality it’s an idealism that in most cases can’t be achieved. Often due to social, cultural and/or financial influence. My predisposition towards ‘acceptable roles’ guided me towards an entry-level position I am at best content with, but which is not what I desire. Breaking this barrier of being chronically dissatisfied will require a big life change. It will require taking risks and building up the motivation and self-confidence to get out of my comfort-zone and steadily take steps towards improving my current situation.

Action plan:

Seeing as I have no influence on the constantly changing work environment or the increasing lack of job security, compromise will still be essential in reaching my ultimate career goal. But compromise

doesn't always mean staying stagnant. **Charles Chen** published an article called 'Positive Compromise: A New Perspective for Career Psychology' in the Australian Journal of Career Development back in 2004 that spoke about building up the ability to handle compromise a more constructive way. Chen (2004)

Commented [JL(2):

Charles P. Chen, PhD, is Professor of Counselling and Clinical Psychology at OISE, University of Toronto (UofT). He was a Canada Research Chair (2006-2016) in Life Career Development. He is a Distinguished Honorary Professor and Guest Chair Professor at more than 10 major universities around the world. - WIKIPEDIA

Positive Compromise basically means negotiating with yourself when to a need trumps a value. This essentially means making trades. Both in the workplace and in our personal lives. For example: Trading your daily morning takeaway coffee to start a small fund towards a bigger financial goal. Or going back to a part-time position at work in order to get re-educated or retrained in a certain field. Positive Compromise, according to Chen, encourages finding a career intervention that eliminates giving up all of your personal ambitions to make way for needs. However, in every compromise made the individual must feel that at least some parts of their needs have been met.

Chen suggested 4 stages to positive career intervention.

- *Open positioning*: Keeping an open-mind that change can and would be positive in certain scenarios.
- *Vision development*: The ability to gain understanding of different options, and building an insight of the implications compromising will have.
- *Risk Management*: The ability to predict the impact of taking risks, and building up the confidence to decide to take said risks when the impact could be positive.
- *Action implementation*: Following through with making the compromise and afterwards assessing whether the benefits outweigh the negatives. Draw a lesson out of both the positive aspects of your compromising choice as well as the negative aspects.

3. Career planning

Having now realised that growth requires compromise and change, it's vital to draw up an exit strategy from my current employment comfort zone in order to reach my goals. Taking in consideration the modern-day lack of job security, and my personal financial situation, this strategy must be gradual and with the least amount of financial risk.

As mentioned earlier in this writing assignment, my ultimate career goal would be opening a small business with my husband. In particular, a tattoo parlour. My husband has been a certified tattoo artist since 2018, and I am currently in the process of getting certified as a permanent make-up tattoo artist. As of this moment in time however, we are both still in full-time employment elsewhere. The main obstacle that is currently holding us back from starting a business would be the financial means. We mainly lack the starting capital needed to lease a commercial property. In order to get the capital needed we have several options, many of which we have had to eliminate due to time restrictions from our current employment. Such as renting a chair in another artist's studio or renting a stand at a tattoo-convention. After eliminating the impossible options, two options remained open. We either continue to try and save up, or we try and get a small business loan.

Business loans are not easy to obtain if you have no background running a business or have a poor credit history to prove you can be considered as financially reliable. We currently lack both. Therefore, a strong business plan would be our best course of action.

4. What banks want?

When choosing to get further education in the UK, my main focus of course was to choose a course related to business management. As I have no previous experience whatsoever running my own business, I

thought it would be wise to find a course that could teach me the basics, at best.

Throughout this year, I have learned how to draw up a professional business plan, which has helped me gain some more confidence and the prospect of walking into a bank to apply for a loan, does not seem so daunting to me anymore.

As we can't provide the bank with proof of solid financial reliability, or a history of successful business ownership, what we will have to demonstrate would be our motivation, our portfolios, our ability to present the lender with proof of an already existing client base, realistic financial projections, and most importantly, our capability to carry out the services offered in a professional and certified way.

Are these qualities we currently possess?

As my husband has been remotely tattooing clients through guest spots at various studios across London, he has indeed built up an existing client base. Once I am fully certified I do plan on trying to get spots at various salons to build up a certain reputation. Or work for free to build up the experience and portfolio needed to present the lender. In the meantime, I plan on continuing my education, and continuing to expand my knowledge on successful business management.

5. Self-motivation

“You must have a level of discontent to feel the urge to want to grow.”

— Idowu Koyenikan, *Wealth for All: Living a Life of Success at the Edge of Your Ability*

I believe my self-motivation is currently lacking tremendously, this by outside influences discussed during the reflection stage of this

writing assignment. I would like to refer back to Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise. But also because of my own attitude towards change. Giving up comfort and security in order to risk taking a leap in the unknown is incredibly daunting. Not only job insecurity, but also fear of failure, fear of financial loss and personal insecurities have gotten in the way of chasing my goals. Even though I have slowly lost the drive to push myself to grow, I have not lost the ambition to grow. My career goals are continuously in the back of my mind and I feel through this writing assignment I have realised that it's either now or never.

6. VAK learning styles

Being able to present proof of further education to lenders, especially in business management, could have a significant impact on the lender's decision to grant us the loan. It will also help me gain as much insight as possible into being a successful business owner. So, the wisest path to choose in this moment in order to move forward with my career goal, would be to educate myself as well as possible on running a business and learning how to assert myself enough to succeed or progress in my career choices. Taking up a higher education course after being out of an intense learning environment for several years proved to be a challenge. Processing large volumes of information and making deadlines after such a long time was stressful and at times, overwhelming.

In this particular module of career development, our lecturer discussed tackling this issue by encouraging us to look at several different learning styles and choosing a style that works best for each particular individual. As all of our brains are wired differently, the style of learning you choose is a very individual choice. Out of the several styles discussed during the lecture, the VAK learning-style

seemed most suitable for me. VAK stands for **Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic learning**.

VAK learning styles looks at the three main sensory receivers to determine a person's best learning adaptability. For example, some students will respond better to visual stimulants (such as video material, photographic material, projection slides, etc..) but there are some students that would respond better to auditory stimulants (Such as listening to a teacher's lecture, listening to guest speakers, podcasts or audiotapes, etc..) and then you also have students that respond best to kinaesthetic stimulants (participating in group activities related to the subject, participating in activities related to the study topic, etc..).



<https://thepeakperformancecenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/VAK-Image.jpg>

After reflecting on this through in-class questionnaire, I have learned that I perform best through auditory learning. When attentively listening to a lecture or podcast I can memorise and process information better than doing an exercise on a study topic or looking at a graph. Because of this, I'd do better to record lectures and re-listening to them several times, rather than making notes and re-reading them. I feel my attention span on reading material is much shorter than my attention span on auditory material.

having gained this insight will be highly valuable in the coming years, especially when presented with a large volume of study material.

7. Personal development

Having now established the various reasons as to why I have been stuck in the same cycle of employment and inability to reach my goals, it would be wise to take this moment of reflection and draw up a more concrete strategy to implement over the course of the next few months, to map out certain key-areas I can start working on at present, until we manage to fulfil the list of requirements needed to acquire a small business loan. I decided to draw up a **Johari window**, followed by a **SWOT analysis**.

The Johari window (Inghram, Luft, 1955) is mainly used as a tool to better understand the relationship you have with yourself and others. It's frequently used in self-help groups and in the corporate world as a tool to discover one's self.

Commented [JL(3)]: This technique was created in 1955 by Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham. Both were professors in psychology.

	Known to self	Unknown to self
Known to others	- Fast learner - Positive mindset - Adaptable - Caring - Self-assertive - Trustworthy - Modest - Responsible - Problem solver	- Idealistic - Mature - Observant - Controlling - Tendency to micro-manage - Overthinker - Overbearing - Impatient - Intelligent
Unknown to others	- Sentimental - Insecure - Fearful - Hesitant	- Resorts to self-criticism - Jumps to worst-case

	- Reflective - High Anxiety - Shy	scenario too quickly - Nervous - Gets things done - Able to think on my feet
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Looking at the Johari window and especially the areas my peers had answered about me is surprising.

I wouldn't associate myself with the corporate traits such as intelligence or the tendency to micro-manage. But reflecting upon it I can see that they have observed me correctly. I seem to hold back from starting a large task until I have fully planned out how I will tackle it. Sometimes this does influence my work as it creates a level of procrastination that could be damaging in the large scope of things.

To have a better insight on the positives and negatives of my career plans, I have drawn up a SWOT-analysis to accompany the Johari window.

A SWOT-analysis is a valuable tool used to determine a set of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats. Whether in a business setting or in a personal development setting, it remains a useful tool to implement when strategically planning your next career or business moves.

Strenghts - Employability skills built up over the course of the last years in various employment sectors (sales, customer services, hospitality, real estate, etc.) - Academic skills gained when acquiring my first bachelors' diploma in my home country - Creative ability to be a successful tattoo artist gained through 10+ years of art and visual education. - The ability to put certain events into perspective and not give up after initial failure. - The drive to continue growing and not settle for less	Weaknesses - Fear of failure - Fear of financial loss - Personal insecurities - Choosing comfort overgrowth - Insufficient credit history - Financially dependent on full-time employment income - Time restrictions due to full-time employment leaving little time to work on personal career goals.
Opportunities - The opportunity to further educate myself into business management and gain more profound insights on running a business - Opportunity to obtain a small business loan, whether through government schemes or personal lenders. - Opportunity to build up a strong portfolio once fully certified	Threats - Increasing rental prices on commercial property - Increasing insecurity on the job market, especially after the current Pandemic - Stricter requirements in order to obtain business loans - Constantly changing legal requirements for tattoo parlours set out by local councils.

8. Conclusion

I would like to conclude this paper with a personal development plan.

“Personal development planning enables individuals to take charge of their own learning. Learning becomes a proactive as well as reactive process, designed and prioritised to support immediate development needs as well as longer term ambitions” (AUA Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice (Higher Education Administration and Management (OUVA))

Step 1: Planned outcome

Where do I want to be by the end of this period? What do I want to be doing?

What do I want/need to learn?	What will I do to achieve this?	What resources or support will I need?	What will my success criteria be?	Target dates for review and completion
• Open my own business (Tattoo parlour)	• Educate myself on business management. • Work on improving credit score in order to qualify for a business loan	• A qualified and valuable course on business management • 15-18k starting capital	• Business knowledge and insights learned through education. (e.g. how to make a business plan to convince lenders) • Qualifying for a moderate-interest business loan	• June 2020 (first academic year completed) • February 2021 (attempt at obtaining business loan) • June 2021 (second academic year completed) • June 2022 (third academic year completed)

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