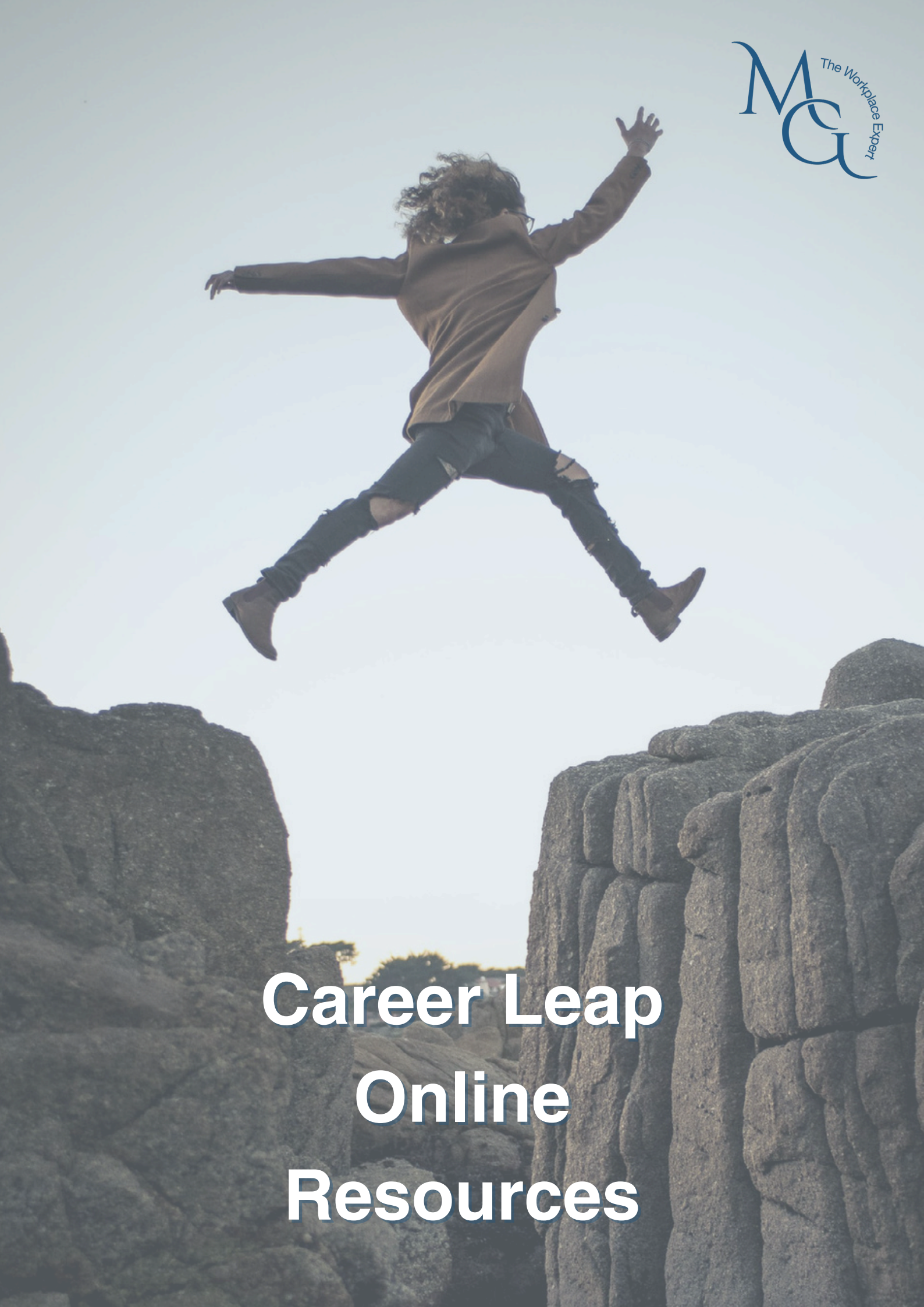

Career Leap Online Resources

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INTRODUCTION

Hello,

Welcome to your Career Leap resource.

It is wonderful to see that you have downloaded this online resource.

Career success and ongoing employment require you to actively manage your career each and every day. You can't afford to play safe, to stay small, to not take risks, to not change or position yourself effectively.

The Career Leap strategy is only effective if you actually do the work, and complete these exercises. They require deliberate time, deep thought and reflection, potentially with the help of a trusted adviser, partner or colleague. So take your time, and seek advice when you need it.

I wish you every success as you embark on your Career Leap adventure.

Enjoy,

P.S. I'd love to hear how you go so feel free to drop me a line at michelle@michellegibbings.com.

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Exercise 1.1: Check your career health

Answer yes or no to each question in this table.

Part A: Time focus		Yes	No
1	Do you spend time actively planning the next steps in your career?		
2	Do you believe your role/profession will change significantly in the next three years?		
3	Are you aware of how your role will be impacted by the arrival of new technologies such as AI and robotics?		
4	Do you continually stay abreast of how your industry and profession is changing?		
5	Are you clear on the value you offer through the work you do, and how that value may need to change?		
6	Are you taking regular steps to build your knowledge base and network?		
7	Are you looking for ways to improve the work you do, rather than doing it the same way it's always been done?		
8	Have you taken deliberate action in the past 12 months to update your career profile and position in the market (such as updating your LinkedIn profile, meeting new people or engaging in profile-building activities)?		

Action: For each 'yes', give yourself one point. Tally your score (with a maximum total of eight points).

TOTAL

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Interpreting your results for Part A

If you scored 5 or less in this exercise, you are past focused. If you scored 6 or more, you are future focused.

For Part A, write down if you are past or future focused.

Now answer yes or no to the following questions.

Part B: Career focus		**Yes**	**No**
1	Are you willing to take risks with your career and move into roles where you feel uncomfortable because you don't (yet) have all the skills and knowledge?		
2	Do you believe your career success is the direct result of the effort you put into it?		
3	Do you believe you can influence your career outcomes?		
4	Do you spend money and time on career and personal development, including in areas beyond what is needed for your current role?		
5	Have you proactively built a network to support your career progression?		
6	Do you maintain a balanced perspective on your employability and career prospects (i.e. not overly anxious or overly ambivalent) to support your career progression?		
7	Do you believe it's your responsibility (not your employer's) to develop yourself and your skills?		
8	Do you critically assess and reflect on your career progress at least once a year?		

Action: For each 'yes', give yourself one point. Tally your score (with a maximum total of eight points).

TOTAL

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(continued)

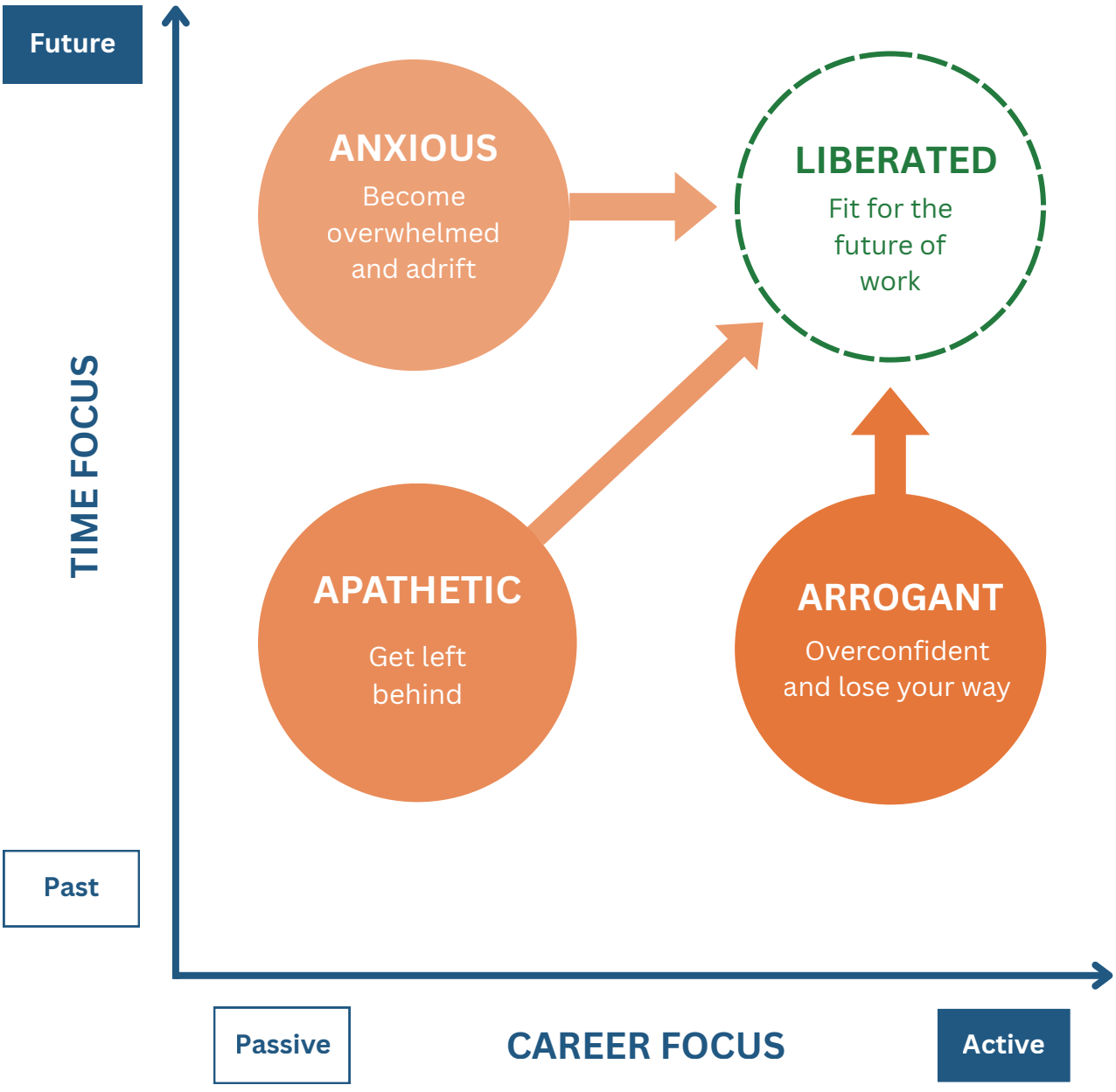
Exercise 1.1: Check your career health (cont'd)

Interpreting your results for Part B.

If you have scored 5 or less, you take a passive approach to your career. If you have scored 6 or more, you take an active approach to your career.

For Part B, write down if your approach is passive or active.

Circle on the chart where you landed, by finding the point of intersection for Part A and Part B.



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Exercise 2.1: Figure out your why

Thinking about your purpose or motivation, write down words, thoughts and ideas over a period of a few days. You may be someone who likes sketching ideas or creating Pinterest boards — whatever works for you.

The object is to capture your ideas, feelings, emotions, moods and impressions. The ideas don't need to be perfectly formed, so long as they have meaning and resonance for you.

This is the start of your thinking about what 'could' be in the context of what matters to you, whether it involves family, friends, health, spiritual contentment, community service, personal goals or career achievements.

These ideas will percolate, bubble up and eventually spill over. When that happens, you will know you have hit on something. It will feel right, and you will feel good when you think about it.

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Exercise 2.2: Find your rhythm of life

1. Every week has 168 hours. Fill in the table with estimates of how much of that time you spend each week on:
   - **Career** — work and activities associated with your job, and developing your career.
   - **Connections** — caring for others, socialising, spending time with the people who matter to you, such as friends, family and colleagues.
   - **Finance** — organising and managing your financial goals.
   - **Learning** — reading, learning and practising new ideas and skills, and participating in courses.
   - **Lifestyle** — leisure pursuits and things you do in your 'downtime'
   - **Self-care** — sleep, exercise, meditation and other activities that contribute to your health and wellbeing.
   - **Service** — giving back to others through such activities as community service and volunteering.

Activity type	Percentage of time allocated each week	Satisfaction level
Career		
Connections		
Finance		
Learning		
Lifestyle		
Self-care		
Service		

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2. Now ask yourself honestly (without judgement or self-justification) whether the time allocated to each activity makes you feel:
    - Satisfied
    - Dissatisfied
    - Unsure or ambivalent.

3. Do a quick self-assessment (again, without judging yourself). What does this exercise tell you about how you currently prioritise your time?

Look at what you spend a lot of your time on and derive satisfaction from, as well as where you are dissatisfied with the amount of time you are spending. Then note where you would like to spend more or less time.

As you reflect on these insights, consider their potential significance for your future career choices. For example, if you are currently spending disproportionate time each week working, leaving little or no time for your family, you may need to seek a career that offers more flexibility. If you currently devote little time to learning, you may want to pursue a career path that allows you to spend more time learning. If you are dissatisfied with the time you spend serving the community, perhaps you should seek a new career direction that offers that opportunity.

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Exercise 2.3: Check your mindset

Leveraging the work of Dr Carol Dweck, assess where your mindset currently sits using this checklist, identify where you could make improvements, and move towards a growth mindset. Which of these elements would you tick off as applying to you?

Fixed mindset		**Growth mindset**	
I feel threatened by other people's career success.	☐	I draw inspiration from other people's career success.	☐
I ignore feedback on my work, dismissing it as irrelevant.	☐	I welcome feedback and seek to learn from it to advance my capability and career.	☐
I give up easily when I get knocked back, and I avoid challenges.	☐	I persist with my career goals, despite challenges and setbacks.	☐
I'm convinced I'll never get any better at that task/work, so there's no point in trying.	☐	I persist with my career goals, despite challenges and setbacks.	☐
I hear myself saying:		**I hear myself saying:**	
'I'm no good at this.'	☐	'What else can I do? What might be missing?'	☐
'This is good enough.'	☐	'I'm proud of my work effort. It's good work.'	☐
'I give up. I can't do this.'	☐	'With practice and effort, I'll be able to do this.'	☐
'This is as good as it gets. I can't do any better.'	☐	'I can always improve my work.'	☐

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Exercise 2.4: Audit your personal circumstances

In this exercise you'll reflect on the context of your career change, personal commitments, financial position and lifestyle expectations.

1. **Purpose and context**
   Consider the context of your career leap, and if the shift is optional or obligatory — and therefore how quickly you are seeking to leap. Your change may be driven, for example, by a desire to do something different or by your role being eliminated or changed due to AI and automation.

   Write down the reasons for your career leap. Reflect on the work you did earlier in the chapter on your why and purpose. What does this tell you about what is important to you in undertaking a career leap?

2. **Role requirements**
   Identify the specific job requirements that need to be considered when planning your career leap. This may include your preference for full-time or part-time, contract or permanent, one role or a portfolio of roles, or being self-employed or a salaried employee.

   If you want to be a salaried employee, consider also: your desired job level, whether or not you wish to manage people, your preferred work environment, and whether there are industries you won't work in or organisations you don't want to work for.

   If you want to run your own business, you can identify any specific considerations that need to be factored into your decision. This might include the type of business and service offering, and the experience, planning and funds required to establish it.

(continued)

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Are you able to work anywhere or are you geographically bound? You may need to eliminate jobs where relocation or frequent travel is required, or you may be seeking a job where you can work flexibly — from home, anywhere in the world or with a compressed working schedule.

3. **Financial position**

Dig into your financial position to determine whether it facilitates or potentially constrains your leap.

First, calculate the minimum income required to support your current lifestyle and the target level. Then identify other necessary benefits, such as an ability to access extended holiday leave, sick leave and study support, and to participate in incentive schemes or receive other employment benefits beyond a salary.

(continued)

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Next, examine your current expenses and consider if there are areas where you might reduce spending to fund your leap. Remember, you may need to make short-term sacrifices to achieve your ultimate career leap goal.

Look at the amount of money you have in reserve and how long this would last (based on your expenses) if you didn't earn an income for a period of time. This will tell you whether you can realistically exit your current employment before you secure a new role, and how quickly you will need to land your leap.

4. **Lifestyle expectations**

You need to get real about the energy, risk, time and money you are willing to devote to making your leap. If you think this is going to be effortless, sorry — think again!

Ask yourself:

- How much effort am I willing to put into learning new things to facilitate my leap? [None/A little/A lot]

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Exercise 2.4: Audit your personal circumstances (cont'd)

4. **Lifestyle expectations (questions continued)**

Ask yourself:

- Am I willing to pay for new learning (or other resources) that may be necessary for my career leap? [Yes/No/Maybe]
- How willing am I to take a risk with my career by trying new things and venturing into new areas? [Low/Medium/High]
- How willing am I to sacrifice leisure time to devote time to making my leap happen? [Low/Medium/High]

Take a moment to look at what you have written for each of these sections.

What does it tell you about the key elements that need to be considered as you select your career leap destination?

Are there parameters that are likely to constrain your ability to leap? If so, can you change them?

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Exercise 3.1: How far are you willing to leap?

How you approach this exercise will depend on whether you already have some career-leap ideas. If you have a number of potential career leap ideas already in your mind, write them down.

For each of those ideas, determine how many of the career change elements would be activated by a leap of that type. If you don't yet have career leap ideas, then look at each of the career change elements and consider which you are likely to want to change as part of your career leap.

(continued on next page)

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Exercise 3.1: How far are you willing to leap? (cont'd)

The following table (Table 1) shows combinations of the career change elements and the likely level of stretch involved, then suggests the career style most suited to a leap of that nature.

Using Table 1 as a guide, please make sure to record your answers in Table 2. Do this by determining the level of stretch for each identified career-leap option and see if it matches the career style you identified earlier.

If it doesn't match, consider what might need to change: either change the type of leap or adopt a different career style.

Remember, if you are a Navigator, you are more likely to prefer a lower level of stretch; if a Surveyor, a medium to higher level of stretch; and if a Pioneer, you will typically seek the highest level of stretch possible.

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Table 1: Reference Example

Career Leap Options	Career Change Factors						Level of Stretch	Career Style
	Functional Role	Occupation	Industry	Organisation	Level	Country		
Moving from a role in Finance to a role in Risk in the same organisation	✓						Low	Navigator
Moving from being a store manager to a regional department head					✓		Low	Navigator
Moving from a role in Finance to Risk, and changing industries	✓		✓	✓			Medium	Surveyor
Moving from Finance to Risk in the same industry /organisation, but different geographic zones - eg., Australia to Singapore	✓					✓	Medium	Surveyor
Moving from working in corporate to running a business that is directly aligned to your current area of expertise		✓	✓				Medium	Surveyor
Moving from being a Teacher to a Radio Announcer		✓	✓	✓	✓		Medium-High	Surveyor -Pioneer
Moving from being accountant in a Telecommunications company in Australia to Head of Marketing for a FMCG based in Singapore		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	High	Pioneer
Moving from a corporate role to running a start up	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		High	Pioneer
Moving from a corporate role to running a small business	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		High	Pioneer

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Table 2: Your Working Table

Career Leap Options	Career Change Factors						Level of Stretch	Career Style
	Functional Role	Occupation	Industry	Organisation	Level	Country		
How far are you willing to leap?								
Note the type of career leap you would be willing to undertake	Tick the boxes below that match						Your level of desired stretch	Your Career Style
Example: Willing to move across functional roles and organisations, but not geographies or industries	✓			✓			Low	Navigator

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Exercise 3.2: Rate your strengths

Looking at your technical/professional skills, your current competencies and the in-demand competencies, self-rate your level of proficiency, using the scale:

1. No current skill/competency
2. Some skill/competency, but not proficient
3. Proficient at the skill/competency
4. Expert with a high degree of skill/competency.

(a) Technical/professional skills

Using your CV and past roles as a guide, list all the technical and professional skills you have, self-rating your level of proficiency.

(b) Current competencies

Rate yourself against the competencies relevant to your current profession. If you need help, Google your occupation and the word ‘competencies’ for a relevant list.

(c) Future in-demand competencies

Rate yourself against the competencies that are likely to be in most demand in the future:

complex problem solving	emotional intelligence
critical thinking	judgement and decision making
creativity	service orientation
people management	negotiation
coordinating with others	cognitive flexibility

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Exercise 3.3: Pinpoint your versatile strengths

Using the strengths that you identified in exercise 3.2, consider whether they are transferable, adaptable or replaceable. This will help you pinpoint the versatility of your strengths.

YOUR STRENGTHS (technical/ professional and competencies)	For each category answer yes, no or maybe		
	Transferable	Adaptable	Replaceable

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Exercise 3.4: Hothouse your career leap options

Imagine:

- What if you took a job that paid 50 per cent less but that you loved 50 per cent more? What could that role look like?
- What if you re-engineered your current job? What could that involve?
- What is the biggest career leap you could possibly take?
- What would be an unexpected leap, one you haven't considered before?
- What role have you always wanted to take on but never acted on?
- What if you take on a role completely different from what you are now doing? What might it be?
- If you could write your own job description, what would it look like?
- If you worked for yourself, what would you do?
- When you look at your strengths and consider what you love doing, what comes to mind?

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Exercise 4.1: Assess your career specifications

In table 1, rate the most important specification number 1, the second-most important number 2 and so on (include additional specs if you need to).

Table 1: order your career specifications

Career Specifications	Order of Priority
Alignment with life goals	
Autonomy	
Learning and challenge	
Money/financial security	
Status/power	
Sense of achievement	
Work environment and flexibility	
Other:	
Other:	

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Looking at your prioritised list, select your top three and list them in table 2.

Then add in the career options you identified in chapter 3 (using as many columns as necessary), and compare each option to your top three specifications to see if they are met. Answer yes or no.

Table 2: Match your career specifications

Priority career specifications Is this met? Yes/No	**Career Option 1**	**Career Option 2**	**Career Option 3**	**Career Option 4**
1				
2				
3				
Career Matching				
Does this option match your top three priority career specifications? Yes/No				

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Exercise 4.2: Assess the level of risk

For each career option, assess the relative risk for each risk type - rating either low, medium or high. Once you've done that, look at the total level of risk for each leap option, considering which option has the least risk and the most risk, and what level of risk feels acceptable for you. You want to make a decision as to whether or not you are willing to take on that risk.

Risk categories **What is the level of risk involved?** **Low/Medium/High**	**Career Option 1**	**Career Option 2**	**Career Option 3**	**Career Option 4**
Financial				
Health/Stress				
Relationships				
Reputation				
Other:				
Cumulative level of risk				
Is this level of risk acceptable to you? Yes/No				

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Exercise 4.3: Match your time frame with the effort required

Use this exercise to help you assess the level of effort required for each potential career leap option. Note whether the effort is low, medium or high (relative to the other options). Then decide if the effort involved matches the time frame in which you need to make the leap.

Typically, the greater the level of effort, the longer it will take to leap; and the lower the level of effort, the shorter time it will take to leap.

Effort assessment: How much effort will you need to put into the following activities? Low/Medium/High	**Career Option 1**	**Career Option 2**	**Career Option 3**	**Career Option 4**
Level of stretch				
Skill acquisition				
Networks being established				
Market repositioning				
Other activities				
Cumulative leap effort				
Does the effort match the desired time frame in which you need to leap? Yes/No				

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Exercise 5.1: Plan your learning acquisition program

Use this exercise to specify your learning gaps, what you need to do about them and the timeline involved. It's also useful to note whether the learning is optional or mandatory.

Learning gap	Optional or mandatory	Steps to close	Due date
Technical skills required for your destination			
General and specific knowledge required for your destination			
Competencies required for your destination			

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Exercise 5.2: Prepare your master plan

Fill in this table with the details of the specific activities you need to do to make your career leap happen. This will form your master plan.

Activity type	Your specific actions	Due date
Finances		
Infrastructure		
Knowledge base		
Legal		
Market positioning		
Network		
Other activities		

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Exercise 6.1: Assess your current career identity

Fill in this table, noting where there is alignment and misalignment between how you see yourself and how others see you. Then consider whether that helps or hinders your career leap.

Career identity — areas of alignment	In what way does this help or hinder your career leap?
Career identity — areas of misalignment	**In what way does this help or hinder your career leap?**

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Exercise 6.2: Write your narrative

Set aside some time alone in a space that is conducive to reflection. As you write your story, think about the past, present and future.

Ask yourself:

- What are the core milestones in my life — both positive and negative?
- How have they shaped how I see the world?
- When I look back over my life to date, what am I most proud of, and what am I least proud of?
- What does that tell me?
- How have my views of the world been formed?
- Who has most influenced my life. Why and in what way?
- How do I react when things go well, or not so well?
- What are the stories I tell myself about who I am?
- Do these stories help or hinder my progress? In what way?
- What matters to me and where do I want to leave my mark and really make a difference?
- What's my vision for the future?
- What do I want to be known for?

What comes up for you? What key themes emerge when you look at your answers? Use those details to start building a narrative about who you are, who you want to be, why you do what you do and what impact you want to have on those around you.

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(continued)

Exercise 6.2: Write your narrative (cont'd)

Once you've spent time crafting and refining your narrative, the next step is to share it with a couple of trusted colleagues and friends.

Get feedback from them, and find out what they think and whether they believe it sounds like you. Ask them how they felt when they read it.

This is particularly important. You want people to feel something when they read it. It needs to evoke emotion and create a connection.

These words are going to underpin how you take yourself to market, so ideally, when someone reads your manifesto, they will say, 'I want to meet that person.'

Your narrative doesn't have to please everyone. You will never do that, and why would you want to?

Your purpose is to be yourself, so if someone reads your narrative and doesn't like what you stand for, that's okay. You wouldn't want to work with them anyway!

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Exercise 9.1: Do your pre-flight inspection

If you're feeling unsure about whether you are ready, complete this pre-flight checklist to get you ready to board:

- Do I have a general destination?
- Am I clear on my market positioning?
- Do I have a network in place, or in development, to support my leap?
- Are my finances in place to support my leap?
- Am I prepared to accept the risks and make the tradeoffs associated with this leap?
- Is my learning program underway?
- Is my plan for my leap progressing well?
- Have I nailed enough key elements of my business plan to get things off the ground (if I'm flying solo)?

If you have answered 'no' to any of these questions, ask yourself:

- What isn't in place and what needs to be?
- Does that really stop me from boarding my flight, or can I catch up later?

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Exercise 10.1: Conduct your career and life stocktake

To check in on your career and life, every year or quarter, answer the following questions.

Career

- What have you achieved this year that you are really proud of?
- What would you do more of or less of next time?
- Do you think your career is on or off track?
- What else do you want to do to progress your career?
- What is changing around you that you need to factor in?
- Is your leadership narrative still current — does it represent who you are and what you stand for?

Connections

- Are you maintaining important connections in your life?
- Are there new connections you'd like to make?
- Are there connections you'd like to strengthen?
- Does your advisory board need tweaking to match where you are right now?

Finances

- Are your financial goals clear?
- Are you on or off track to achieve those goals?
- What additional steps do you need to take to progress?

Learning

- What new skills, knowledge or ideas have you acquired? How are you using them?

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Exercise 10.1: Conduct your career and life stocktake (cont'd)

- What else do you need to know to keep yourself future-proofed?
- In what areas do you need to bolster your expertise?
- What could you learn that is different from your day job?
- What have you learned about yourself recently?
- What have you learned about others recently?

Lifestyle

- Are you spending enough time indulging in pursuits you enjoy?
- What have you done recently that was just for fun?
- What is on your bucket list that you haven't yet ticked off?

Self-care

- Are you getting enough sleep and exercise?
- Are you eating well?
- Are you giving yourself time to recharge?
- Are you using self-care practices (meditation, reflection, a gratitude journal or other activities) that give your mind and body a break?
- Have you recognised and celebrated the breakthroughs and successes you've had?

Service

- How is what you are doing helping others?
- Are you providing support to the community in some way?
- Are you helping people around you, or are you focusing only on your own needs?

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ABOUT DR MICHELLE GIBBINGS

Dr Michelle Gibbings is an award-winning author and globally recognised workplace expert who helps leaders, teams, and organisations elevate their strategic influence to accelerate progress. With over 30 years of experience, including in senior executive roles, she understands how organisations operate from the inside out.

As a sought-after keynote speaker, executive coach and trusted facilitator, she works with forward-thinking organisations seeking to empower leaders of today and tomorrow to thrive through complexity, unlock greater self-awareness and make powerful, wise and congruent choices. Choices that better serve their colleagues, organisation and career.

Her work focuses the spotlight on the shifting paradigms of work. Her books are must-have tools for both employees and managers, including Step Up: How to Build Your Influence at Work, Career Leap: How to Reinvent and Liberate Your Career, and Bad Boss: What to Do if You Work for One, Manage One, or Are One.

Michelle's approach is pragmatic, inspiring and anchored in insight and action. She helps people stay cool, calm, and collected amidst complexity, and bold, brave, and balanced in the face of disruption.

She gets organisations, leaders and teams ready for tomorrow, today!

Pragmatic Wisdom · Intentional Impact

NEXT STEPS

Thank you for taking the time to work through the Career Leap exercises.

I'd love to hear your key takeaways.

If you're ready to explore what's next, you can reach out to support@michellegibbings.com. I'd be delighted to continue working together.

My executive coaching is designed to help you step forward with clarity and confidence, supporting your growth, strengthening your leadership capability, and helping you create meaningful, sustained progress in your career.

Getting you ready for tomorrow, today. ®

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