

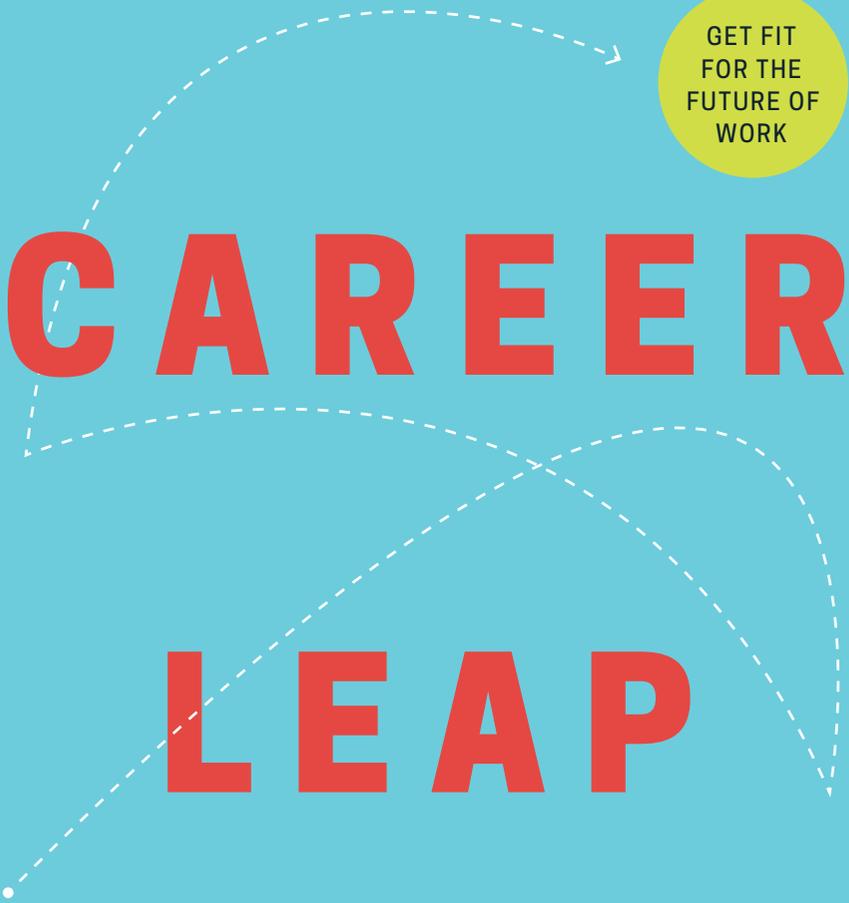
MICHELLE GIBBINGS

'*Career Leap* is a great leap forward for anyone navigating work in the 21st century!'

—Bernard Salt, best-selling author of *The Big Tilt*



GET FIT
FOR THE
FUTURE OF
WORK



CAREER

LEAP

HOW TO REINVENT AND LIBERATE YOUR CAREER

WILEY



INTRODUCTION

When you land on ‘Go’ in a game of Monopoly, you collect \$200. When you hit a ball that races to the boundary line in cricket, you score four runs. When you serve in tennis and your opponent fails to return it, it’s an ‘ace’, and you win the point.

These are rules of the game. It’s near impossible to play successfully if you don’t know them. Or if they keep changing, and you don’t know they’ve changed, and you have no ability to influence how they play out.

In life, one of the biggest games we play is work. Depending on what we do and where, there are different rules attached to this game. These rules can be written and unwritten, fixed or malleable, prescriptive or general, helpful or unhelpful.

The rules for your work might require you to be at the office before 9 am, to finish at 5 pm and to take a lunch break at midday. Or state that if you hit your KPIs for the year, you’ll get a bonus. Or perhaps that you get a rostered day off each month. Typically, these rules are set by someone else—the person, organisation, industry or government you work for.

To succeed at work and across your career, you need to know not just the rules but how to navigate them (and sometimes when to ignore them) so you can get stuff done.

Many constantly changing external forces are affecting the rulebook of work. How we work and what we do at work are undergoing a seismic shift, mainly thanks to new technology, which is making us more mobile and our workplaces more flexible. At the same time, automation and artificial intelligence are impacting many professions and roles.

The rules of the game, as you once knew them, have changed and will continue to change so rapidly that one day you could wake up and find you don't know how to play the game.

You need to make the new rules work for you, not against you.

Today's challenge

Throughout your career you face decisions on multiple fronts. These decisions are not just important but essential to your future success and ongoing happiness. Regardless of how you feel about your job now, at some stage in the future you'll need to shift, reshape or reinvent your career.

What decisions are you making to future-proof your career?

The term *future-proof* is often used in the technology and medical sectors, where it's crucially important to build products that retain their value and don't quickly become obsolete. It applies equally to your career. If you want to enjoy a long-lasting and interesting career, you need to future-proof it.

Through our work we provide a service, and over time any service, just like any product on the supermarket shelves, risks becoming obsolete and being replaced by something else. Something that's bigger, better, brighter, faster, more innovative.

If you worked in an office in the 1960s (or watched the TV series *Mad Men*), you will recall the pool of secretaries clicking away on their Remington typewriters while managers sat in their private offices, the size of which was dictated by their seniority, using rotary dial phones to make important calls. By the early 1980s secretaries were using electric typewriters, then over time the whole typing pool vanished as each employee took possession of a heavy personal desk computer (no remote working here).

At that point you communicated by fax or, if you were really ahead of the times, a mobile phone the size and weight of a brick. The arrival of email and wi-fi in the 1990s changed all this. As the new century progressed we turned to laptops, BlackBerrys and, finally, smartphones. Now individual offices began disappearing entirely in favour of open, collaborative work spaces and hot-desking, while more and more of us worked from home.

Technology has changed not just how we work, but when and where we work too.

Technology's role as a catalyst for change isn't new. In medieval times, for example, books were handwritten and painstakingly copied by monks, until the fifteenth century when Gutenberg's printing press superseded their work. Today much of our communication is done online, so jobs relying on hard-copy printing have declined while jobs depending on digital devices have increased.

What sets our world apart today is the dizzying pace of change as well as its breadth. Society is approaching a crunch point. The World Economic Forum has dubbed this period of history the Fourth Industrial Revolution, as the fusion of technologies is blurring the lines between the physical, biological and digital. Robotics, nanotechnology, artificial intelligence, machine learning, genetics and biotechnology are coming together to create totally new environments.

Revolution or evolution?

In his best-selling 2016 book *Homo Deus*, futurist Yuval Noah Harari wonders what will happen to the many millions of people who will enter what he calls the 'useless class' as computers take away our jobs. Business leaders, from Alibaba's Jack Ma to Microsoft's Bill Gates, also worry about what these changes will mean for workers.

As Jeffrey Joerres, former CEO and chairman of ManpowerGroup, puts it, 'We must deal with the reality that when full-scale robotics and AI arrive in a broad-based, affordable, easily justifiable way, we'll see enormous waves of workers put out of work and ill prepared to take on different jobs.'¹

A 2016 report by the CSIRO and the Australian Computer Society, *Tomorrow's Digitally Enabled Workforce*, concluded that nearly half of all jobs in Australia are at risk from computerisation and automation.

Additionally, a McKinsey Global Institute report in 2017 found almost half of today's available work activities have the potential to be automated. Their analysis, which surveyed 46 countries representing about 80 per cent of the global workforce, found that fewer than 5 per cent of occupations could be fully automated using currently available technology. However, about 60 per cent of occupations have at least 30 per cent of activities that could be automated. Their conclusion was that most occupations will change in some way.²

Whether you see technology as a force for good or for evil, what you can't deny is that these changes are ushering in a new era for the workforce.

At the Fiona Stanley Hospital in Perth, Western Australia, robots are already dispensing drugs and are reported to be safer, less error prone and more efficient than humans in this role. In Japan, insurance company Fukoku Life is using IBM's Watson Explorer technology to calculate payouts to policy holders. The system will scan hospital records and medical certificates and extract the relevant data to determine the correct payout.

LEGO's factory in Billund, Denmark, is almost fully automated. Precisely calibrated robotic machines create up to 36000 brick pieces per minute; that's around 2 million pieces every hour and billions every year. And these machines work 24 hours a day. They don't take sick leave or holidays. They may occasionally be shut down for maintenance, which is no doubt carried out by another robot.

In Amazon's vast warehouses, it's estimated that employees spend no more than one minute taking an item off the shelf, boxing and shipping it. The rest of the work is done by robots, and automated processes and systems. Now comes Amazon Go, essentially a retail store with no checkout. With the Amazon Go app on your smartphone, you can just walk in, take what you want and go.

The impact of these changes extends from blue-collar to white-collar employees, manual workers to knowledge workers. If the work involves any process that can be coded into a machine or any task that can be standardised, it will likely be at least partially automated.

If we ignore the reality of change,
we will be left behind.

A job for the future

My father was an academic with a tenured position, a permanent post at the university he was employed by for as long as he wanted. He worked there from the beginning to the end of his career. Can you imagine that?

The concept of a job for life no longer exists. The latest statistics in Australia show that most workers are highly mobile, changing jobs every three years. The rate of casual and contract work is increasing. Those entering the workforce now are likely to have at least 17 different employers and five different careers during their lifetime.³

Over the years, the nature of the relationship between employer and employee has changed, and loyalty has certainly suffered. The employee provides a

service for which the employer pays compensation. Ideally, it is an exchange of equal value. But when that value equation feels out of balance, one party will quit the relationship and move on. As the rate at which this happens has increased, so the length of time an employee stays with the same organisation has dropped.

Charles Handy first introduced the concept of the Shamrock Organisation in his 1989 book *The Age of Unreason*. The Shamrock has three types of workers⁴:

1. a central group of high-value, core employees
2. a group of independent contractors, typically professionals
3. a pool of temporary workers, often on outsourcing contracts, usually doing low-end work.

This idea plays out in the workforce today. Organisations are blending internal and external resources to bring together the right skills more efficiently. In the future, teams will increasingly be self-managed, with employees having no permanent boss. Companies are also moving from having professional managers to what Bain & Company call ‘mission-critical roles’.⁵

Organisations won’t need as many managers in the future.

In China the Haier Group, a consumer electronics and home appliances company, is built around marketing, design and manufacturing. The teams are fluid, focused on specific projects and sourced through an internal pool of resources. Organisations like this pull workers together for a distinct project, and once the project is finished the workers move on to something else.

Similarly, in Australia the ANZ Banking Group is moving towards a scaled, agile philosophy, adopting a team-based approach to the delivery of work, as opposed to a hierarchical approach.

Already, contingent workers or freelancers make up about 40 per cent of the total workforce in the United States, and this is expected to rise to 50 per cent by the year 2020. The corresponding figures for Australia are 30 per cent and 40 per cent respectively.⁶ More than 85 per cent of all new jobs created in Australia in 2016 were part-time or casual.⁷

With borderless teams, co-working spaces and freelancing on the increase, these temporary flexible jobs, coined the ‘gig economy’, have undermined the traditional economy of full-time, work-for-life jobs. Whichever statistic

or source you relate to, there's no denying the impact this is having on our personal and professional lives.

Playing the new game

In the past, the rules of the game were fixed. They were set by big organisations and bureaucracies. Now there is a democratisation of the workforce that enables you to have much more freedom and choice about how and when you work.

The gig economy and the transition to an automated and fully flexible workforce is here! Yet most of us are still completely unprepared for them. We still tend to have an outdated view of what a career path looks like. We are encouraged to think of it as linear: we enter the workforce and explore a few roles, then midway through our career we land something that will keep us happy until we retire.

Careers these days are fluid, organic and adaptive, which means they need a degree of reinvention. Gone is the notion of one organisation and one role or function for life. Gone is the notion that someone will plan your career for you, and you can sit back and just let it happen.

You can't rely on recruiters to find roles for you. You can't rely on your current organisation to develop you. You can't rely on roles finding you. This may sound hyped-up or scary to some readers, but it's a reality that we all need to be prepared for.

Salim Ismail, the author of *Exponential Organizations* and an expert in helping organisations leverage technology and strategy to grow faster, suggests, 'Today, if you're not disrupting yourself, someone else is; your fate is to be either the disrupter or the disrupted. There is no middle ground.'⁸

Now more than ever you need to be comfortable designing and orchestrating your own career path. You need to find roles that work for you, and sometimes you will have to create your own. You must be ready and equipped to embrace change at any moment. You must become the leader of your own destiny, your own career.

Knowing how to write the new rulebook for your career gives you a competitive advantage that will last long into the future.

So let's recap. Table I.1 shows you how the rulebook setting the parameters of work has changed, and the new possibilities you will want to embrace.

Table I.1: career parameters

Ditch the old career parameters	Create new career parameters
Job for life — a few companies with a number of different roles	Multiple careers — potential for multiple companies, roles and career paths
One role and one company at a time	Portfolio of roles — jobs on the side, side hustle or 'moonlighting'
Full-time or part-time employment with hours relatively fixed	Flexible work arrangement that suits your lifestyle and needs
Job taker: you take the job that is on offer	Job maker: you create your own job that fits your lifestyle, skills, competencies and ambitions
See yourself as working in a 'role', which has no defined end date	See yourself as working on a 'project', with a more defined start and end date
Manage your career, which has a linear progression	Own your career, which has a circular progression with multiple points of career reinvention
You are hired because of your formal knowledge and qualifications.	You are hired because of your life experience, expertise and competencies.
You rely on recruiters, job advertisements and your reputation to get a job.	You rely on your network and market positioning to get work. It's the value you deliver that matters.

Value your work

In their book *The 5 Patterns of Extraordinary Careers*, James Citrin and Richard Smith map out the three phases of a linear career:

1. **Promise**—from formal education to early thirties
2. **Momentum**—from mid thirties to early forties
3. **Harvest**—from forties to retirement.

In phase 1, your *perceived value* was significantly weighted towards your potential or promise. As you moved into the next phase your potential value

was converted into *experiential value*, as you mastered skills, took on more responsibility and built your credibility through experience.

By phase 3 you had been in the workforce for 25 to 30 years. At this point your career either plateaued or declined, or if you were well positioned it continued to advance. The authors give the examples of people who advanced to board roles, consulting engagements, and not-for-profit or broader advisory roles.⁹

In such a linear career world certain rules to career success applied. You were told to get a trade or university degree, to work hard and specialise. It was your skills and hard work that would help you achieve your aspirations. You were encouraged to discover what you were passionate about. You may have worked for a business or organisation, or been self-employed, and for many your company was your brand. You looked ahead and planned your career by seeking direction, with a 10-year career plan in hand. Your work had a defined start and stop time frame, which was set by your boss or the person you worked for.

Today, it's all about value. The value you can deliver to others through the work you do. But what is valued changes over time, just as the value of currencies in foreign exchange markets fluctuate and new currencies enter the market.

To future-proof your career it's essential to know the value of what you offer—your market value—and to be able to increase that value and, at times, change it.

The Career Reinvention Cycle

Regardless of where you are or how you feel about your work now, at some stage in life you'll find you need to shift, reshape or reinvent your career—and you'll need to learn to leap.

The catalyst for this change will be one of the following:

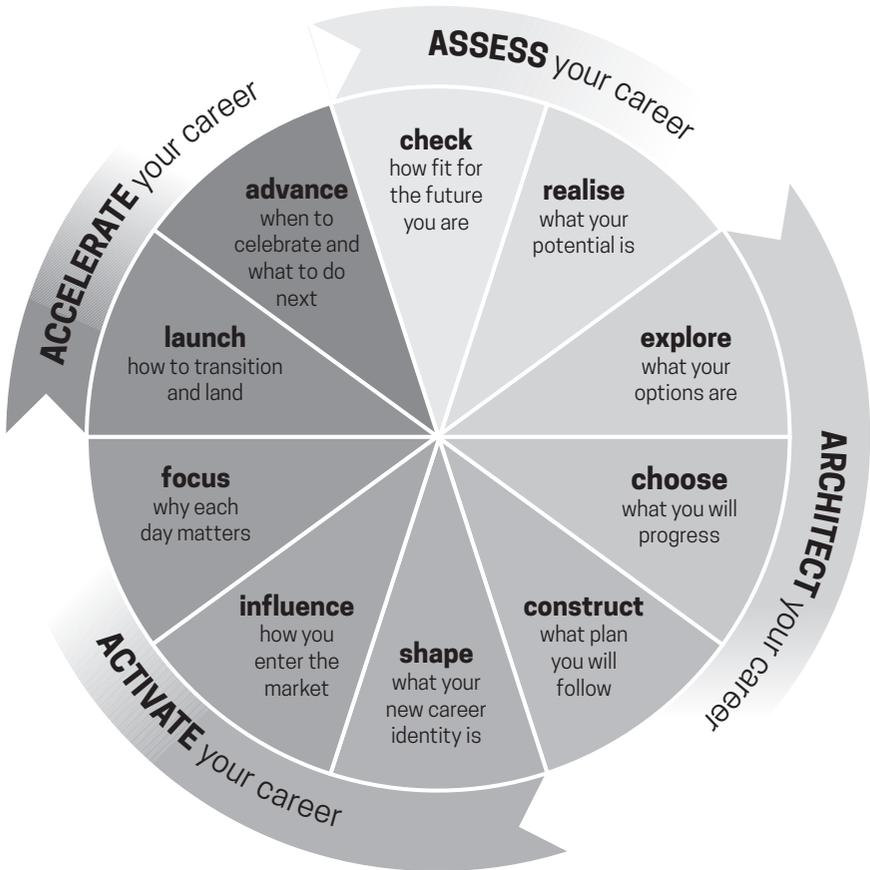
- **Choice.** Your needs or interests have changed and you've decided to do something different. You *want* to move on.
- **Conscription.** Your role has been made redundant or has changed significantly. You are *forced* to move on.

Many of us feel uncomfortable with change, particularly if we believe it is being 'done to us'. The Career Reinvention Cycle, illustrated in figure I.1, is designed to help prepare you for whatever the world throws at you, at any age

and at any stage of your career. This need or desire to leap won't just happen once. It will happen multiple times, which is why it's a cycle.

The cycle involves constantly scanning the horizon, seeing what is changing and determining how you need to respond and position yourself for the next stage of your career. The Career Reinvention Cycle will guide you through the key actions you need to take to make a successful leap onto a completely new career path at any time in your life.

Figure I.1: the Career Reinvention Cycle



Many people have made career leaps, and in doing so have redefined their career options and liberated their career outcomes. The Career Reinvention Cycle will help you to do this too.

Phase 1: Assess where you're at in your career now

In phase 1, you'll get real about where you are right now. In much the same way as you would when joining a gym, you will put your career through a fitness assessment. This will help you understand how fit your career is for the future. You'll start to equip yourself for the future by identifying what could hold you back or constrain you from making a leap.

Phase 2: Architect where you want to leap to

In this phase, you'll start to explore the realistic options you have for making a leap. You'll examine your strengths and skills in the context of how the world of work is changing. You'll be asked to make choices and tradeoffs to create clear, actionable next steps and to develop a plan to get to where you want to head.

Phase 3: Activate how to get there

In phase 3, you'll take the plan you have created and start putting it into action, getting ready to go to market. You will make decisions about how to position yourself, build the right network and manage your exit from your current role. Your influence and go-to-market strategy is crucial to enabling your leap.

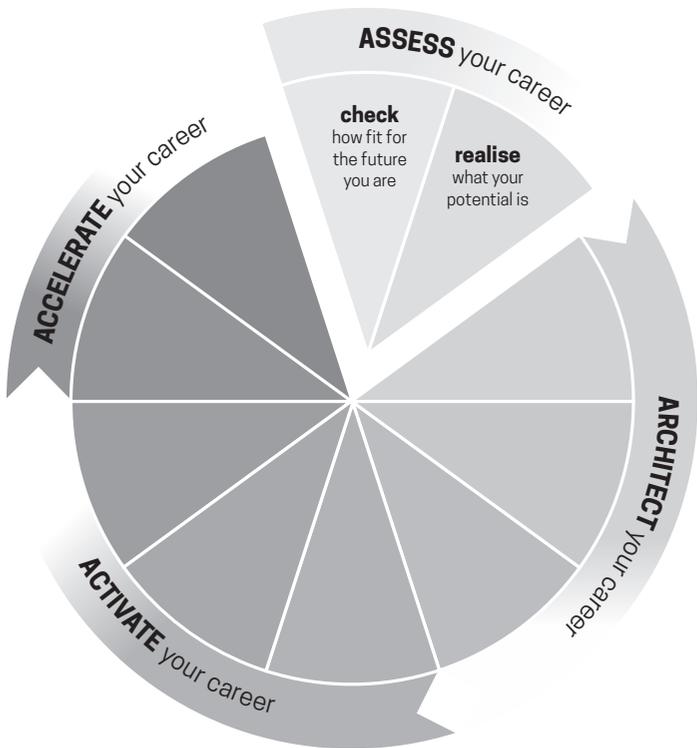
Phase 4: Accelerate how you leap successfully

In the final phase, you will transition into your leap. There are certain elements to consider when your leap is 'in flight', to ensure you land successfully. Leaping doesn't stop there, of course. You need to learn to stay one step ahead of the game, and this phase will show you how.

PHASE 1

ASSESS

Where are you in your career now?



CAREER LEAP

Your career is just one piece of the big pie we call 'life', so you need to examine it in the context of everything that affects you externally and the decisions you are willing to make internally.

In this first phase, you're going to assess your career as it stands now and where it could be in the future. You'll identify what impacts your choices, including family, colleagues and individual circumstances.

Just as you have a regular medical check-up, you need to periodically check up on your career. How fit are you to leap? Have you been oiling the machine or have you been cruising, watching too much TV on the couch, eating potato chips and letting things get away from you?

Through this process you'll start to identify your individual constraints and, more importantly, where there are opportunities. So let's lose the remote control. It's time to get fit for the future of work!

1

CHECK ARE YOU FUTURE FIT?



*'Ambition has one heel nailed in well, though she stretch her fingers
to touch the heavens.'*

Lao Tzu

For some of us, work is a necessary evil, to be endured in return for money so we can pay bills, go on great holidays and fund a lifestyle—it's a means to an end and nothing more. For the fortunate few, it's something we love doing. Work gives us purpose, satisfaction, enjoyment and fulfilment.

Love it or loathe it, work is a critical part of your life.

Across your lifetime, you are likely to spend up to 100 000 hours at work or in some form of employment. That's based on you starting full-time work at 18, retiring at 65 and working only eight hours a day for the standard 261 working days of the year. If you are a workaholic or are used to putting in a few hours of overtime each week, it's likely to be substantially higher.

So wouldn't you rather be doing something you actually like to do?

I don't mean you'll like every minute of every day (that's totally unrealistic), but on balance you find it stimulating, interesting and valuable. Something you feel good about getting up for instead of hiding under the doona.

Many of us feel trapped in a job we don't like. We're bored, in a rut, stressed out or overwhelmed by the sheer volume of work we need to do. And yet we remain in that rut, telling ourselves, 'Yeah this place sucks, but better the devil you know. At least I know how this place works.' Or, 'I don't know what else to do. It's too hard to find a new job.' Or, 'I can't afford to go—this place pays too well.'

Does any of this sound like you? If your work makes you so unhappy that it impacts not just your wellbeing, but those around you, then it's time to consider 'voting yourself off the island'. That means taking control and making the decision to go somewhere else or do something different, even if it feels hard or uncertain.

Yes, finding work can be challenging, but a job doesn't just provide financial benefits — it's also critical for our self-esteem and mental health.

There's no doubt there will be points in your life when throwing in a job could feel like an irresponsible luxury. There's the mortgage, school fees and bills to pay. It's not a luxury, though, when you're working in an environment that is eating away at you, impacting your behaviour, destroying your self-confidence, and causing undue stress and anxiety. If you don't change the environment, it will slow you down, block you or stop you in some way.

CAREER STOP SIGNS

Change is hard, which is why so many of us stay in jobs we hate until something (or someone) forces us to move on.

Here are six warning signs that it may be time for you to cast that vote:

- 1. Your performance is dropping.** Your work environment no longer brings out the best in you. Your motivation is low so you only do what you have to do. This 'bare minimum' approach is impacting your performance, the outcomes you deliver and ultimately your reputation. This type of damage can have long-term consequences, including making it even harder to get that next job.

CHECK

- 2. Your values are misaligned.** Your values and those of the organisation are out of alignment so you feel like you have to change who you are when you are at work. This may show up as your not feeling comfortable voicing your opinion, or finding yourself forced to support ideas that go against what you believe in.
- 3. You now have 'cynic' as your middle name.** You spend large parts of the day complaining about what's happening at work. You don't trust your work colleagues and you no longer offer ideas on how to improve things. You only complain about them.
- 4. You are constantly worried you are next in line.** Your workplace is forever restructuring and making people redundant, and you are constantly worried about when the axe will fall on your role. You can see that technological change is going to consume your job.
- 5. You're on the brink of burnout.** You feel burnt out and the physical signs of stress are presenting in how you behave at home with your friends and family. You feel exhausted all the time and the thought of going to work makes you feel anxious or highly emotional. You dread Monday morning, and likely drink several glasses of wine or beer in the evening to drown out the day.
- 6. You've stopped learning.** You don't feel like work is challenging you. You're bored or uninterested by what's going on. You feel like there's no more room to grow or expand your horizons. You need something else to push you so you're not always working on autopilot and counting down the clock.

How many of these conditions can you relate to? All, none or some? If it's all or some, it's time to seriously think about overhauling your career. It's time to change and get in shape!

Find new cheese

In his classic business parable *Who Moved My Cheese*, Spencer Johnson tells the story of two mice, Sniff and Scurry, and two little people, Hem and Haw. The mice and the little people lead a comfortable if predictable life, taking the same route each day to the store of cheese on which they feed. One day, however, they discover all the cheese is gone.

Sniff and Scurry had been noticing the gradual reduction in the cheese store and weren't surprised. They moved on quickly to find a new source of cheese. Hem and Haw, though, found the change very hard. They felt entitled to the cheese and had become lazier and less inclined to put effort into finding a new source. All of this made it much harder for them to adapt when the change hit.

They became nervous and unsure about how to respond to the changed conditions. After much pain and struggle, they eventually found an effective way to respond and ultimately to find new cheese. They learned many lessons along the way, a pivotal one being that they needed to 'smell the cheese often so you know when it is getting old'.¹⁰

There are many people who, like Hem and Haw, don't know how to react to change and specifically how to respond when their job changes or disappears. This is a very real problem, because all our jobs are being impacted at some level by new technology, artificial intelligence and automation. And this is why you need to learn to leap and reinvent your career, at any age or stage.

You must look ahead and plan so you don't wake up
one day and discover all your cheese is gone.

Change is hard, but it doesn't have to be so. All you need to know is how to find new cheese. The only difference between you and someone who has made a career leap—from lawyer to media personality, sailmaker to corporate leader or sports star to investment banker—is that they were intent on finding new cheese.

These leaps didn't happen by accident. They were planned and involved deliberate decisions and targeted actions. They reinvented their career step by step, which is what you're going to learn to do.

Is a robot coming for your cheese?

We are all being impacted by technological change and automation. The two questions to ask yourself are, 'How much am I being impacted?' and 'What

does this mean for me?’ Your answers will help set you up to take advantage of new opportunities as they arise.

There are a number of different ways to do this. Online tests will indicate broadly how much of your job is likely to be impacted by automation. Google ‘future proof quiz’ and you will find a range of options, such as the quiz created by WorkingNation, a nonprofit organisation based in the United States (visit futureproofquiz.workingnation.com). It is focused on raising awareness of the workforce employability gap created by advances in technology and globalisation. Googling ‘will a robot steal my job’ will also lead you to a variety of resources, including willrobotstakemyjob.com.

These explorations can help you to gain clarity on how ‘safe’ or ‘vulnerable’ your current role is.

It can be easy to ignore how the world is changing and to lull yourself into a false sense of security, but the chances are you will be affected by these changes. It’s better to be aware and prepared, rather than remaining in denial. The more prepared you are, the more options you will have.

How fit is your career?

Doctors advise us to get an annual medical check-up to make sure we are physically healthy and in good order, but when was the last time you put your career through a fitness check, to see if everything is on track for the future?

Your career warrants the same level of attention as your health because the two are closely connected.

A career health check isn’t just relevant to people who aren’t enjoying their work or working environment. It’s important for everyone who is in the workforce or trying to re-enter the workforce, particularly in the context of the rapid change we are facing in today’s world.

We all need to understand whether our career is fit for the future. Assessing it periodically helps you determine whether you are in a rut or holding on to an unrealistic, outdated view of your career. It also challenges you to think about what may need to shift and what you may need to do more or less of to ensure a successful, sustainable and rewarding career.

Exercise 1.1 (overleaf) is your starting point for building a plan to future-proof, reinvent and ultimately liberate your career.

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

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)?		
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' you answered, give yourself one point. Tally your score (with a maximum total of eight points).

TOTAL

(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.

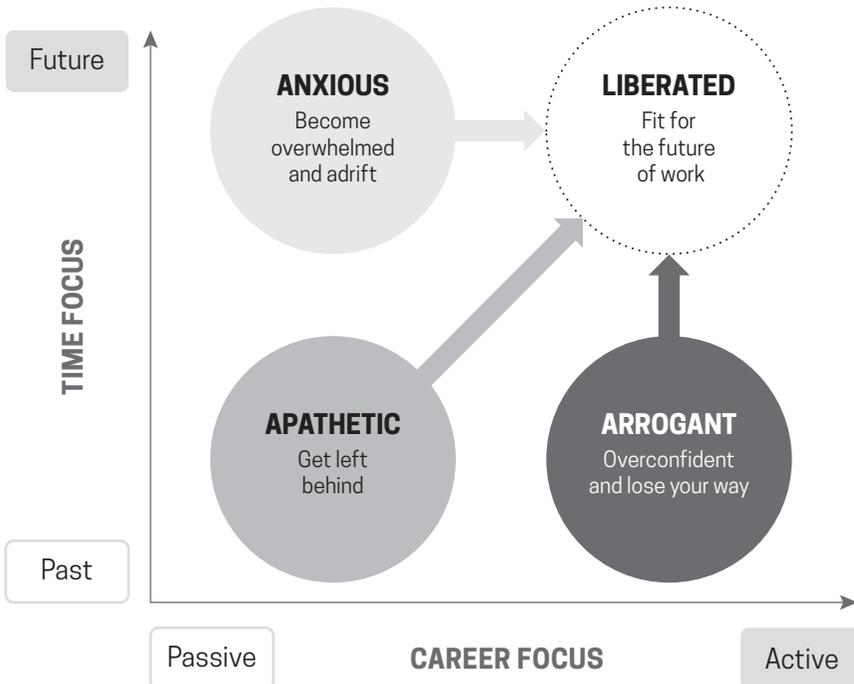
For Part B, write down if your approach is passive or active.

Your zone of health

Depending on how you've answered the questions in this first exercise, you will fall into one of four career health zones, as illustrated in figure 1.1.

You can work out what zone you are in by looking at your results from Part A and Part B of the exercise. Part A is your position on the vertical axis and Part B is your position on the horizontal axis. Find the points of intersection to locate the career health zone you currently occupy.

Figure 1.1: the four career health zones



The four health zones can be summarised as follows.

Zone 1: Apathetic (passive approach, past focused)

If you're in this quadrant, you typically make choices and construct a life that makes you feel like your career options are limited. You are so focused on the past and just living for the moment that you spend no time preparing for the future. You rarely engage in deliberate career development and career decision making, preferring instead to rely passively on options suggested by others or expecting others to manage your career for you. Ultimately, you are getting left behind.

Zone 2: Anxious (passive approach, future focused)

In this quadrant, you let fear drive the decisions you make—fear of failure, fear of the unknown, even fear of the future. You make easy, less risky career decisions and are more concerned with what could go wrong than with seizing possible opportunities. Your future focus is stunted by a passive acceptance that you can't change or influence the outcomes. Ultimately, you are getting so overwhelmed that your career is drifting.

Zone 3: Arrogant (active approach, past focused)

Here you are extremely confident of your place in the present because of the success you have had in the past. Consequently, you don't take a long-term view of your career. You ignore the fact that the world changes, and so too does your place in it. While you may consider yourself to be actively focusing on your career goals, you fail to devote enough time and energy to developing and reshaping your skills and competencies to ensure you are future ready. Ultimately, through your overconfidence you lose your way.

Zone 4: Liberated (active approach, future focused)

Equipped with the willingness, knowledge, insight and skills to implement a sustainable future career, you enter the liberated zone. You balance delivering in the present and focusing on what the future may bring. You see yourself as the architect of your own career, and take deliberate and focused steps to stay ahead and position yourself for growth and advancement. Ultimately, you are prepared and ready to take career leaps to sustain a successful and fulfilling career.

Find the next chapter

John Bertrand AO

John Bertrand AO will always be remembered for his critical role as the skipper who led Australia to victory in the America's Cup in 1983.

'I was wondering what to do next after the America's Cup,' he says. 'I rang up the then Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, and asked him to introduce me to the most entrepreneurial person in Australia. He asked me if I could be in Sydney the following night to meet Sir Peter Abeles.'

'This led me to a corporate career with Ansett Energy, which was a high-tech startup between Israel and Australia focused on solar energy development. From there I moved into the world of finance and property development. After that I launched a company on Nasdaq, which was a partnership with NBC focused on sports broadcasting over the internet. I now sit on a number of boards and am President of Swimming Australia.'

John's career leaps demonstrate powerfully that he isn't afraid of change.

'There are always opportunities being thrown up that are potentially fantastic. It is 20 per cent of people who make it happen, while 80 per cent of people watch it happen. Content people are not world champions,' he says.

'See how other people make a living. Figure out what drives you and what you are interested in, then be smart and work out if you can make a living from it. I've never met a successful person who is not passionately involved in what they do. To be successful it needs to be a 24/7 investment, not a 9 to 5.'

John also points to the importance of having mentors and being comfortable about asking for help.

‘If you look at the great leaders of the world, they have typically had great mentors they’ve been able to bounce ideas off. I’ve also found that people don’t ask for help very much, but in a lot of cases if they ask for help it will be provided. It’s very rare for people to say no once they are approached.’

Get liberated

At this stage you may be surprised, delighted or horrified at where your career currently sits. Maybe your career isn’t as healthy as you thought it was!

If you find yourself in a health zone that doesn’t sit comfortably with you, then it’s important to remember you can do something about it—*you can change*. In fact, you’ll probably move through these different health zones at different stages in your career.

You may start your career in the liberated zone, and then over time move down to the arrogant zone as you become comfortable and complacent in your career—until, perhaps, you have no choice but to leave that comfort behind because of a restructure.

Alternatively, you may move up from the apathetic zone to the liberated zone. Different events (such as reading this book!) may trigger a change in your perspective, attitude and actions.

Whatever zone you find yourself in now, and in the future, the good news is that you can take action to be liberated again.

When you have a liberated career, you are in control. You’re in the driver’s seat. You make conscious choices about which way to head, which route to take, and how and when you mean to get there. You choose how and when to leap, and that’s what we’ll explore next.

Start with the end

Jessica Watson OAM

In October 2009, 16-year-old Jessica Watson sailed out of Sydney Harbour with a goal. She planned to sail solo non-stop and unassisted around the world, and she had to overcome intense media criticism in order to fulfil her dream.

This adventure led to other sailing projects, authoring a book, touring internationally, producing a documentary (narrated by Sir Richard Branson, no less) and becoming the 2011 Young Australian of the Year. These days she's a partner in a startup, a public speaker and a youth representative for the UN World Food Programme, while writing her second book and studying for an MBA.

Having achieved so much at a relatively young age, Jessica has always been clear on her ambitions.

'Like any big goal, it is useful to approach a career leap by working backwards from the ultimate destination,' she says. 'It's not rocket science, but you have to start with the end in mind. That's not to say the end goal shouldn't change and evolve, but it's important to have a clear vision.'

Bringing this vision to life is about being clear on what needs to get done.

'Working on important, non-urgent tasks that support my end goal has been absolutely key. It's easy to be swept away with everyday stress, but to make that transition you have to purposefully work on the things that matter to that new role.'

'Like any transition, there have been setbacks and challenges, and often things haven't happened as fast as I'd like. Navigating through others' expectations and ideas about the direction I should take has been challenging,' she adds. 'It's easy to be led down a path that isn't really where you want to go by well-meaning people around you.'

CAREER CHECKPOINT

Take five minutes to make an honest assessment:

- Are you ready to vote yourself off the island? [Yes/No]
- How likely is it that your current role will be impacted by technological change and automation? [Likely/Unlikely]
- Which career health zone are you currently positioned in? [Apathetic/Anxious/Arrogant/Liberated]

Some readers won't have answered yes to the first question, but many will answer *likely* to the second. Wherever you sit in the health zone, the good news is you can change and do something about it now to help you in the future.



A MESSAGE FROM MICHELLE

Two of my greatest joys are learning and sharing learning. So writing this book, and being able to share my experiences and the wisdom of others, has been an absolute delight.

If you are committed to liberating your career and really getting fit for the future of work, then it doesn't stop here. The best books (print or digital) are dog-eared, bookmarked and highlighted. They live on as a continuing source of inspiration and reference. My hope is that *Career Leap* is marked up with lots of scribbles and thoughts, collecting much more than dust.

Career leaps don't happen alone. You need a support network to reach your goals. I am always here for that. You can reach me at:

michellegibbings.com

You'll find lots of additional tools, tips and ideas for further advice here too.

And, of course, I'd love to hear how this book has helped you. What worked? What did you find challenging? Where did you leap from and to?

When I'm not writing, I'm speaking, facilitating leadership and team sessions, running training programs and mentoring—all directed towards helping people like you get ready for tomorrow, today.

Let's get liberated together!

Michelle

Has your career path hit a dead end? Are you wondering how you'll get ahead?

Gone are the days of slowly making your way up the corporate ladder to retirement. Now, with the rise of freelancing and the gig economy, the workplace is becoming more flexible and independent — which can leave hardworking people scrambling to find a way to stay relevant.

Career Leap addresses your worries and gives you a way forward. Featuring success stories from people who have made their own career leaps, this book sheds light on what you can do to reignite, reshape and liberate your career. It offers a fool-proof plan for getting your career back on track — starting today. Chock-full of the techniques and practices needed to give you the confidence to change, it arms you with everything you need to make career leaps that count.

This is your personal guidebook to gearing up for fast and frequent change. Learn how to:

- undertake a health check of your career and implement a career strategy
- let go of unhelpful expectations and fear of the unknown to remove career roadblocks
- stay alert to current employment trends to effectively plan your leap forward
- keep yourself challenged and equipped to future-proof your career.

Admit it, you're ready to take the leap — and this book will show you how.



MICHELLE GIBBINGS is a career and change leadership expert and the author of *Step Up: How to Build Your Influence at Work*. She has a distinguished reputation across the Asia-Pacific region as a keynote speaker, adviser, facilitator and executive mentor for many leading-edge corporates and global organisations. Michelle's work is focused on getting employees and leaders fit for the future of work.

Cover Design: Wiley

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 Also available
as an e-book

CAREERS/SUCCESS

ISBN 978-0-730-35219-8
90000



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