

IN THE
LOOP
OF A FLOURISHING CAREER

...

Chapter 6

Resource Pack

On the following pages you will find the exercises from Chapter 6 of the book
In the Loop of a Flourishing Career by Katherine Street

My Career Criteria

As you make decisions in your career there are inevitably things that limit the scope of the decisions you consider. For example, your partner has a role they are very happy and flourishing in, based where you live. You also highly value your relationship and believe a family should live together. As a result of these things moving to another city or country, as a career move, is not an option for you. Therefore one of your career criteria is staying local.

Taking some time to write down and know your criteria is hugely beneficial. First you can refer to your criteria each time you have a career decision to make, asking if the decision supports or breaches a criterion. You can also test potential new jobs against the criteria, perhaps by giving the job a score out of 10 against each criterion.

Using your career criteria for active career decision making helps you understand them at a deeper level. Using them helps you examine them for their veracity and usefulness. For example, taking the staying local criterion above, you might hear about a really appealing job that would require an interstate move. Because you are clear on your criteria you find it easy to put the role aside. You do find that you keep thinking about the role for a long time after. This prompts you to have a deeper conversation with your partner in which you refine your criteria about staying local to be staying local until your children are a certain age. This refinement to the criteria then helps you make a decision to reach out and make contact with people from the interstate role as you never know what might come up in the future.

Everyone, of course, has different and unique criteria. When you take the time to know and refine your own criteria it becomes easier to examine criteria others might want you to have. It is common for bosses, partners and loved ones to have criteria they would like you to adopt as you make career decisions. In many cases this is totally appropriate, such as the staying local criteria. Sometimes, though, other people's criteria are not ones to adopt, and having your own criteria clearly articulated helps you resist their well-meaning advances. For example, a manager had asked me to work with a young fellow who was having trouble being successful in job selections. His manager had supported him to go for five roles in the last six months and he had not been successful in any of them. The jobs were all supervisory roles and the manager had supreme confidence he was ready for the advanced responsibility. When the young man examined his own career criteria he realised he wanted to dive deep into the technical aspects of his role, something he would find harder to do if he was a supervisor. We discovered that in essence he had been self-sabotaging his job interviews because he really didn't want the jobs his manager thought should be his career path.

The career criteria you have will be a combination of practical criteria; for example, where you live, how much you earn, through to more subjective criteria such as the level of altruism you might want to engage in.

Articulating your career criteria is an exercise that takes a bit of time and reflection. The following exercise supports you to determine the 10 most important criteria to currently use in making career decisions. Start by making some dot points about what is important to you against each of the prompts provided.

Then examine your dot points for recurring themes, surprising insights and strong reactions, as these will often indicate things that need to be part of your career criteria. From your reflection make a long list of things that could be your career criteria. Examine this long list and start to narrow it down to the top 10. Do this by identifying similar ideas, and by a process of gradual elimination. Keep a record of your long list, but more than about 10 career criteria will be too unwieldy and overcomplicate your decision making.

Test your final list for a couple of weeks, coming back to it every couple of days for further refinement.

Step 1:

Take your time to reflect on each of the following prompts then make a note of any career specific thoughts, ideas, or aspirations you have about the area. Take at least a couple of days to do this. The notes you have already made in the Vision exercise may give you insights for this exercise.

My physical location:
Balance of home/work:
Time spent at various locations:
Hours of work:
People I interact with:
What people around me do:



What challenges and stretches me:
Things that keep me engaged:
Creativity:
Progress:
Motivation:
Sources of money/income:
Level of income:



Skills I use:

Attributes / talents I use:

Continual improvement / Learning:

Level of direction / Autonomy:

Problems I solve:

Advancement:

People management / Leadership:

Meaning / Purpose:
Who I help:
Altruism:

Step 2:

Reflect on the notes you have made against the above prompts to create a long list of career criteria you would like to use to make future career decisions. Reduce your long list to a maximum of 10.

MY 10 CAREER CRITERIA (in no specific order) ARE:	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

#1 Career Criteria

Date ___/___/___

Something I have found really helps in clarifying and focusing career decisions is to have one thing that is your non-negotiable criteria. One criterion that you are not willing to compromise or wriggle on, and will stand firm for. This one criteria is your non-negotiable and having it seems to make all other decisions easy.

Review your #1 Career Criteria yearly, not to negotiate on it with yourself, but to recommit to it and to make sure it is still your true north. For many years a non-negotiable for me was being home after school for my children. I had lots of other dreams and aspirations, many, many more of these, but this one thing was the thing that was most important for me and I made all my other career decisions within the context of this core thing. Your one thing will change over time, but it is unlikely to change quickly. When I speak with people about this concept I find that a five-to-seven year timeframe is a good amount of time, with most people seeing a change in their core criteria over this period.

Maybe your core thing is to live in a particular city, to finish some study, to work in a particular field, to consolidate your superannuation, to have stability, to have time for activities outside of work. The thing is you are the one who decides what it is. It doesn't mean you don't pursue and consider options and pathways outside of this core thing. Just make sure you are aware of the core thing as it cannot help but frame the scope and breath of other things you are willing to consider.

Don't be surprised though, if this reflection reveals that what you thought was your #1 doesn't fit anymore. It is surprising how long people hold onto myths about what they think is important. For example I know I held onto being home after school for my children far longer than I, or they, needed, and this limited options I considered for a while.

To discover your #1 Career Criteria do the exercise Your Career Criteria and write down your list of 10 criteria. Cut these up into individual words, or a whiteboard where you can wipe them off, or on separate index cards, or on rocks, or some other creative way (for example, maybe you don't use words, but use images). Lay all the criteria out in front of you, then one by one take the least important one away until you are left with just one. It is as simple as that.

At this point in time the following criteria help me make decisions about my career:

Among these the following is my #1 Criteria and I will ensure all my career decisions align with this one thing:

Plus Minus Interesting

Date ___/___/___

Dilemma / Decision to be made:

PLUS	MINUS	INTERESTING

New clarity about the dilemma / decision::

Powerful Decision Questions

Date ___/___/___

The Chip Heath and Dan Heath book *Decisive* inspired the following powerful career questions. When you have a decision in mind run it through these questions to really test the veracity of it.

WRITE THE DECISION YOU WISH TO TEST HERE:

Have a friend ask you the following questions:

- Imagine this option simply vanished as a possibility. What else would you do?
- If you were being a little more courageous is this still the decision you would make?
- Someone has just given you a 'Get out of Jail Free' card, which means you can make this decision, and if in six months' time it is not working out you can come back to this point in time. Is this still the decision you would make?
- It is a year from now and this decision has proven to be disastrous. What didn't you notice now that was pointing to things not working out?
- It is a year from now and this decision has proven to be the best one yet. What did you do that made it such a good decision?
- This decision is going to be published on the front page of the local newspaper. How proud will you be to see it there?
- How can you stress test this decision?
- If your best friend were making this decision what would you think?
- What will you not do as a result of this decision?

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Powerful Decision Questions

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WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Panel of Experts

Date ___/___/___

This decision making exercise comes from entrepreneur Seth Godin. It is a tool to use when you have several directions you could move in and you're having trouble deciding which way to proceed.

The first step is to define each decision then write a one-page pitch for each. In the one-page pitch, sell the benefits of each decision as strongly as you possibly can. Highlight all the positives that may flow from the decision.

Then assemble a group of five people who you know have your best interests at heart. Wise people whom you admire. These people are your panel of experts.

Give your panel of experts your one-page pitches and leave them to debate and choose the path they believe is the best one for you.

All you need to do is commit, wholeheartedly, to abide by their decision.

In writing your one-page pitch address the following points:

- The impact the decision will have on you personally
- The impact the decision will have on those you care about
- The long term impact of the decision in terms of the benefit it will have in the world
- The financial, time, commitment, and emotional cost of the decision
- The alignment of the decision with your values, strengths and things that are meaningful to you

Are you up for it!

MY PANEL OF EXPERTS ARE:

List their names:

1

2

3

4

5