

The background image shows a close-up of a person's hand holding a pen, poised to write on a document labeled 'RESUME'. The desk is cluttered with several crumpled pieces of paper, suggesting a process of drafting and revising. The title text is overlaid on this scene.

The 6 Week Career Makeover Assignment Workbook

This workbook was developed as a free resource for our friends and clients who are pursuing a job search or other career transition. Feel free to reach out to either of us for individual help, and feel free to share this workbook with your friends.

Sherryl Dimitry, Ph.D.

www.sherryldimitry.com

with additional insights from Adrienne Murphy, Ph.D.



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About This Assignment Workbook

This free and free-to-share Assignment Workbook is the companion to the *6 Week Career Makeover: Career Transition & Career Management for Professional Women* [book and course links pending]. While the course focuses on unique challenges that women face in the workplace, it can be used by anyone (girls can use power tools, guys can use this workbook, too!). Our primary focus is on salaried professionals in traditional corporate settings, but the book and these assignments are also useful for anyone looking to shift their career in new directions.

In over 20 years working with professionals who are growing their careers, managing a career transition, or engaging in a job search, we find that most people skip these important steps in the process. Usually, a job seeker (including someone looking to transition internally within their current company), starts with updating their resume, then starts applying for jobs. Instead, I want you to start by getting very clear about your options, the value you bring to an employer, and the problems your unique value helps alleviate for them based on target opportunities you identify. Over the years, my colleague Adrienne and I narrowed down the career transition and job hunt into 6 steps:

Ready:

- Gather your Posse (This is not a solo endeavor!)
- Know Your Value

Aim:

- Design a Career that Supports your Best Life and target your “North Star”
- Identify options and opportunities (and yes, update that resume!)

Fire:

- Engage your Posse and others who know you to land the job or build your business
- Actively Manage your Career until you no longer have to work

The Career Lifecycle

As a talent management executive for multi-billion dollar companies with tens of thousands of employees, I was responsible for managing the “talent lifecycle” from onboarding to learning and development to succession planning, including programs designed to develop identified “high potential” (HiPo) employees from early career professionals, into managers, and emerging executives. Careers have a lifecycle as well. One of the first “assignments” I would give my new HiPo program participants was to talk to at least two or three executives and ask them about their own career journey. No two stories are ever alike. Few careers take a “traditional” career-ladder path. Interests change; priorities change. The needs of your life change.

Careers go through phases. There are multiple key drivers in career decisions that happen at different times in a career for everyone. So, whether your current transition is voluntary or not, where you are in your career may influence the decisions you make as you move to your next chapter.

Occasionally, people seek a career transition because of extreme dissatisfaction with their current work situation. It could be the company culture, a toxic boss, an unhealthy work environment, or even sheer boredom. If this is you, only proceed if you have done everything you can to move to a new

department, role, or focus within your current organization. A successful career transition needs to be about moving toward something you want and not about moving away from something you don't want. There are toxic bosses and questionable work values in almost every organization: Sooner or later you will need to learn how to navigate and manage those challenges. We'll discuss this more in *Part 3: Fire!* and managing your career.

Successful Transitions

Nayla Bahri, Ph.D. conducted research at Columbia University on career transitions. In her study, she found that those professionals who successfully transitioned after a career disruption did five things consistently¹:

- Spent time learning about themselves through their network.
- Invested in themselves outside of work.
- Developed a reflective practice
- Owned their expertise.
- Conducted “experiments” to move into their next career stage.¹

This workbook will help you do each of these and captures the process Adrienne and I used with our clients who come to us when they are looking for a career transition or starting a job search. You can copy, paste, add, and build on each assignment, using this workbook as an ongoing journal and helping you maximize the return of your own career asset.

¹ Read more on Nayla's website: [HOME | Nayla Bahri Leadership and Career Coaching](#)

Week 1: Gather Your Posse

Read “Week 1” in *Six Week Career Makeover* (Or this [LinkedIn Blog Post](#))



ASSIGNMENT 1

List your Posse below, including email & phone numbers. Schedule a short call with each of them to let them know you are in, or considering a career transition. Try to get at least one or two to serve as your Posse Career Coach for the next 6 weeks to keep you on track. Keep your Posse front and center by keeping this on a bulletin board or wall near where you will be reminded you have a great tribe supporting you!

POSSE WANTED



MY POSSE

MENTORS

Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____
Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____

COACHES

Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____
Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____

SOUNDING BOARD

Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____

CONFIDANT

Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____

DEVIL'S ADVOCATES

Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____
Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____

ANGEL ADVOCATES

Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____
Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____

CHEERLEADERS

Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____
Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____

MORE CHEERLEADERS

Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____
Name: _____
Email: _____ ph: (____) _____

Week 2: Know Your Value

Read “Week 2” in *Six Week Career Makeover*

Part 1: Who I Am and How it Drives How I am at Work.

Writing down your reflections has been proven to have a stronger impact on learning. If you hate to write, share your reflections verbally with the person or people from your Posse who have agreed to support your career transition. The key assignment here is to put words to your thoughts. So just thinking about these questions is not enough. I want you to clarify and name those thoughts and make them concrete and real by using words and language. Call your identified career coach (or coaches) from your Posse to discuss and further fine-tune your language.

First, define your “work view” and worldview by thinking about these questions:

Workview: What is work to me? Why do I want to work? What defines ‘good’ or worthwhile work?

Worldview: What is my view of life? What values matter most to me? What experiences give my life meaning?

Then, beyond your field or discipline (acquired competency), spend some time thinking about what makes *how* you do what you do unique and valuable. Think about a time when you felt like you were really adding value to your team/company at work. Think about a time when you felt in “flow” at work, or really enjoyed what you were doing. What are you really good at? Describe a significant accomplishment at work that really made a difference. Think about patterns or “themes” of activities you find yourself doing even if they aren’t related to your primary job. Try to uncover or discover your core “gift.” What makes your contribution and value uniquely you?

Part 2: The Gift You Are.

The people closest to us see us differently than how we even see ourselves. Reach out to at least 4-5 people (close family, friends, no more than one or two close co-workers) and ask them what they see as your greatest value, or to tell you about an experience they had of you that they valued. Write down what you heard. This doesn’t need to be work related. Hearing how others perceive your value will give you insight into your unique value, your core “genius.”

Action: Write a short letter (2-300 words max) to yourself from the perspective of someone who truly understands and knows your unique gifts, encouraging you with confidence during your career transition.



ASSIGNMENT 2

Workview: What is work to me? Why do I want to work? What defines 'good' or worthwhile work?

Worldview: What is my view of life? What values matter most to me? What experiences give my life meaning?

The Gift You Are: Write a short letter (2-300 words max) to yourself from the perspective of someone who truly understands and knows your unique gifts, encouraging you with confidence during your career transition.

WORKVIEW

WORLDVIEW

The Gift You Are

Week 3: The Integrity Game

“Week 3” in Six Week Career Makeover

Consider this definition of the word Integrity:

(in teg’ ri tē) n.

1. The state of being whole or entire.
2. A sound, complete or unimpaired condition.
3. uncompromising adherence to one’s principles; soundness of character; honesty.

The goal of this exercise is to begin to envision your whole life—beyond your job and career (after all, we work to live; not the other way around!). Your unique daemon or “genius” is not your job or your career. You may have opportunities to bring your unique genius and your integrity to your work, but they are not the same thing. So how does your career and work support your ability to embody your genius, and live with integrity?

In *Designing Social Systems in a Changing World*, social systems scholar and founder of the International Systems Institute (ISI), Bela H. Banathy,² identified 8 dimensions a human system needs to sustain itself within its environments. These are the “parts” of your life that become a synergistic whole based on how they interrelate and influence each other. Bela used to also say that “nothing less than the ideal is worth the effort” when designing social systems, encouraging his students to strive to create systems with real integrity.

As you review these 8 dimensions of sustainable social systems, answer the questions for yourself, then go ahead and “score” each dimension on how you are experiencing this dimension in your life right now, compared to what you envision as the ideal “10” (highest). Yes, these are all subjective scores, because only your perspective matters when it comes to your own life.

Health & Well Being

- Are you physically healthy enough for the activities of daily living?
- Are you managing chronic health issues with your health care providers?
- Do you have insurance to cover a health emergency?
- Do you have enough energy to support your goals?
- Do you feel emotionally strong and psychologically healthy?
- Does your mental health affect your ability to do things that are important to you?

Rate this dimension for yourself today. Score _____.

Personal Economics, Financial

- Are you being paid fairly with an opportunity to improve?
- Is there any aspect of your job or work that conflicts with your personal morals or values?
- Do you have more than one avenue to generate income and/or savings (salary, investments, side hustle, etc.)?
- Do you have enough money to cover living expenses?

² Banathy, B. H. (1996). *Designing social systems in a changing world*. New York, NY: Plenum

- Do you know your credit score? Do you use credit wisely and appropriately?
- Do you budget and plan for future financial needs (emergencies, unemployment, retirement, etc.?)

Rate this dimension for yourself today. Score ____.

Lifelong Learning

- How do you engage in learning? Do you enjoy the process of discovery?
- What ignites and excites your curiosity? Do you make time to pursue things that interest you?
- How do you evaluate what you learn? What criteria do you use to evaluate what you learn through your life experiences, your spiritual understanding/sense of meaning?
- How is your ability to use critical thinking to evaluate information you learn in traditional ways?

Rate this dimension for yourself today. Score ____.

Personal & Cultural Relationships

- Do you have a healthy sense of self-worth (self-esteem)?
- Do you have family or friends that you can count on for support (emotional, physical) in a crisis?
- Do your relationships at work add stress or enjoyment to your job?
- How are you involved with your community?
- Does your cultural heritage add to your sense of meaning and personal value?
- Does the societal culture around you reflect the values you hold most important?

Rate this dimension for yourself today. Score ____.

Ethics, Morality, Higher Meaning:

- How do you demonstrate your value for yourself & others?
- How do you nurture your spirit?
- How do you actively live your faith practice or personal sense of life's meaning?
- How do your values guide your behavior with yourself and others in ways that are ethical and moral?

Rate this dimension for yourself today. Score ____.

Creative Expression, Aesthetics

- How do you demonstrate a value for creativity, expression, aesthetic surroundings and enjoyable experience?
- Does your home environment reflect your personal aesthetics and contribute to your well-being?
- What is your workplace like? Your home?
- What does your environment and dress express to others about your values and life work? Do these things remind you of what you value most?
- Do you have an outlet for creative expression?

Rate this dimension for yourself today. Score ____.

Relationship to Social & Natural Environment

- What is the larger society like in your ideal vision?
- Do you feel safe? Free? Is the world peaceful?
- How are you interacting with the natural environment? Does it support your needs? Do you enjoy time spent outside?

Rate this dimension for yourself today. Score ____.

Tools and Technology

- How are you using tools and technology in your life?
- Do the appliances, tools, equipment and other technologies you use make your life easier?
- Do they save you time? Do they enable to perform tasks with better results?

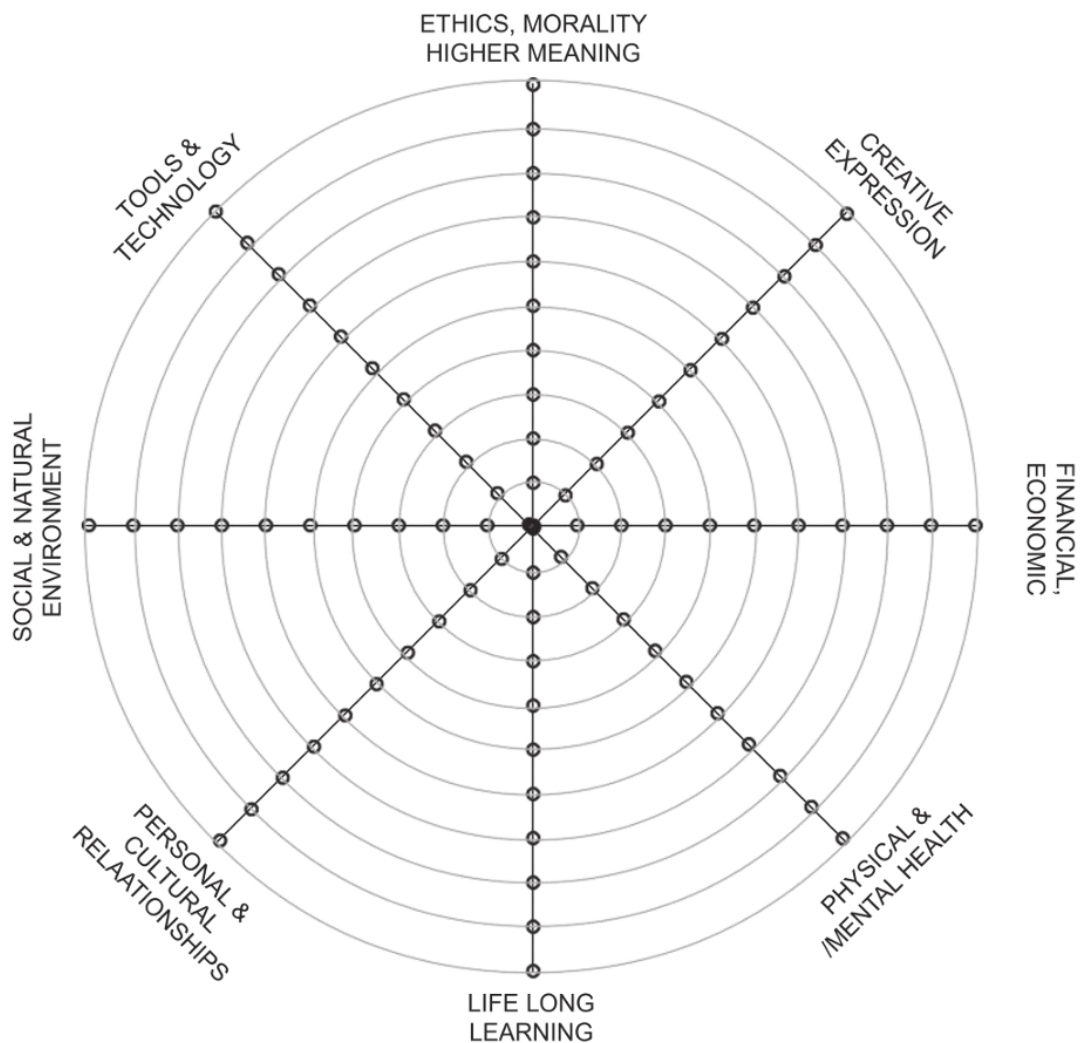
Rate this dimension for yourself today. Score ____.



ASSIGNMENT 3

The Integrity Game: For each dimension (the components of your Life System), mark your score on the “wheel” below with “1” at the center and “10” at the outside. Are you riding through your life on a flat tire? How do each of these life variables influence the other? Do they have a positive or reinforcing influence or a negative or balancing influence on each of the other variables?

Which dimensions of your life need more focus and attention right now? Since we are focusing on your career, let’s put your career inside the wheel: How can your work or job support your ability to focus on these dimensions? Does your current job contribute to or detract from any of these dimensions? How do you want your career to impact all the dimensions of your life system?



Week 4: Applied Genius

Read “Week 4” in *Six Week Career Makeover*

Part 1: Job Search or Income Build?

Whether you want a regular full-time job or not, the data tells an ever-changing story about finding—and keeping—a traditional job. If your financial situation needs to be prioritized in your Life System vision, then finding a traditional job may need to be supplemented with a side gig. Thinking in terms of what you’re good at, what you enjoy, and what has the potential to generate enough income to allow you to focus on other dimensions of your life and your true “genius” or essence, your job and income targets may be different now than they were a few weeks ago when you first started this journey. Consider whether traditional employment, freelancing or independent contracting – or pursuing both – makes the most sense to help support your overall Life System vision. Talk to your Posse.

Whether you are going to look for a traditional job, branch out to freelance or gig work, or pursue both, you will still need to be able to talk to prospective employers (full time, part time) or clients about who you are, and why your unique “genius” will help make their own work easier for them.

For this course, we are going to start with your resume since most of you will be looking for regular employment primarily. We can then use the resume to create a bio and “business pitch” for independent and freelance work.

Part 2: Write your STAR Stories and Resume Bullets

Step 1: Go to one of the major job boards (LinkedIn, Indeed, Zip Recruiter, etc.). If you know what type of position or role you would be qualified to apply for, find 3 or 4 job postings and save them to your computer. Open Microsoft Copilot or Chat GPT (or whatever AI tool you prefer to use) and copy/paste or upload the postings. Prompt the AI tool to summarize the top ten job requirements, duties, skills and experience across the postings.

If you don’t know what position or role you might want to pursue, upload your current resume (don’t worry, it doesn’t have to be a good resume as long as it reflects your experience and skills). Prompt the AI tool to suggest job positions you might be well suited for.

If you’re also—or even primarily—looking for freelance or independent work, have AI make some recommendations for you on opportunities to pursue based on your current resume (then you can ask again for updated recommendations after you’ve updated your resume to best reflect your skills and qualifications).

Until recently, this exercise took a LOT of time. I would make you highlight keywords from several job postings, then compare them all to list commonly sought skills and job requirements for a particular position. Then I’d have you copy resume bullets that demonstrated that requirement. Now this exercise takes minutes.

AI has now provided you with a good starting list of skills, qualifications and job duties. Hopefully, around ten of each. Now, list your work history job title and list at least 2-3 skills or qualifications and also 2 or 3 job duties from the AI list that apply to each position you've had. The more of these skills and qualifications you can align, the better. If you are not comfortable using AI tools (honestly, it's so easy!), Worksheets for the manual process to build this master list can be found in the Resources section. [\[link pending\]](#)

Now, for each skill, qualification or job duty, write a simple STAR story about it using the format exactly as shown below.

STAR stories describe a Situation (what was happening), the Task you completed or the Action you took, and finally, the Result of your action. When you think about the result, obviously try to identify quantifiable numbers or metrics, but qualitative results also matter (if those qualitative results were measured on a survey or otherwise validated, be sure to mention that).

And here's the secret sauce twist that will make your resume stand out and why this approach works better than other resume writing service: After you write your STAR story, you will rewrite the story starting with the **Result** first, followed by the **Action** you took. The Situation is left off the resume bullet because you'll talk about the Situation during your interviews.

Few recruiters read past the first line of a bullet: always list the Result first! Your goal is to include at least 80% (or 8 out of 10) keywords highlighted for your target position.

Tip: To trigger your memory and write STAR stories, go through performance reviews, calendars, major deliverables. Ask colleagues what they think your key value/contribution is or was.

Each of your past positions should have 3-5 bullets reflecting a specific target job. You can list up to 5-7 total for a long-term position held over 7-8 years. Action statements should reflect the skills listed on the requisition. (See a great list of Action Verbs in the Appendix of the PDF workbook)

Tip: Write as many bullets as you can (up to 10) for each position and save this as your "master" resume. Then, edit to the 3-5 most aligned to a specific job opening.

Do not list experience over 15 years old unless you have been with the same company that long. You can add a section called "Related Experience" or "Additional Experience" and list the company and your title only if it is relevant to your current search. Do not list any dates or description of the role(s) in this section. This helps create an "ageless" resume and prevents any conscious or unconscious age bias by the hiring manager or recruiter.



ASSIGNMENT 4

Write at least 5-10 STAR Stories for each position or job (STAR: **S**ituation, **T**ask or **A**ction, **R**esult). Make sure to target the common skills, qualifications and keywords identified from your targeted job postings. Convert each STAR story to a resume bullet with the Result first.

Job Title:

Skill/Experience keywords:

Job Duty keywords:

Situation: A challenge or problem arose around...

Task or Action: To resolve the problem, I did...

Result: The outcome was:

Resume bullet: (Above, rewritten as Result first, Task or Action second. 2-3 lines max):

Job Title:

Skill/Experience keywords:

Job Duty keywords:

Situation: Something I did that I was very proud of (or received recognition for) was:

Task or Action: My responsibility was _____. What I did was:

Result: The benefit to the company (my customer/client) was...

Resume bullet: (Above, rewritten as Result first, Task or Action second. 2-3 lines max):

Week 5: Explore

Read “Week 5” in *Six Week Career Makeover*

Now you are ready to format your updated Master Resume (remember, this will be customized for each specific position to which you want to apply). Use the formatting guidelines found in the [Appendix](#). At this point, it doesn’t matter if your resume is 10 pages long—the more bullets you have for each position, the easier it will be to customize your resume for specific applications.

Here again, we are going to use AI to dramatically simplify and speed up the process. Below are three AI assignments to help you explore career opportunities, both as a traditional employee and as a freelance/independent contractor.

Part 1: Identify target Job Titles/Positions for regular Employment:

Upload your newly updated resume to your AI tool. Ask AI to recommend 4 or 5 job titles for which you’d be well suited. If you have a specific title or position in mind, and AI doesn’t recommend that, or if AI recommends a position that is lower level than you currently hold, ask AI how to improve your resume for your targeted title (only if you know you are fully qualified for the higher level position, of course).

Part 2: Target for Freelance Work Search

2a: Target Freelance and Independent Opportunities

For freelance or independent work, copy/paste or upload your new star stories or your updated resume to your preferred AI tool. Use a prompt something like this to have AI put together a list of suggested freelance or independent contract work you could be suited for.

AI Prompt: Based on my resume stories attached, what type of freelance, part time, or independent contract work could I pursue? [describe a specific type of environment, client or focus if you can]

2b: The Business Pitch

For freelance or independent work, copy/paste or upload your new star stories into your preferred AI tool. Use a prompt something like this to have AI put together a draft Business Pitch. Use the list of AI suggested freelance or independent contract work generated above.

AI Prompt: Based on my resume stories attached, could you draft a business pitch focusing on pursuing [describe type of freelance/independent work, with a specific target audience]

2c: Your Bio

AI Prompt: Can you draft a 2-300-word bio from my resume, focusing on my ability to provide freelance or independent work as [describe the same as 2a].

Your Bio and Business Pitch won’t be perfect (AI is still not as intelligent as the media thinks it is), but you’ll have a good format and draft for your marketing materials, website, etc. You can even have AI draft your LinkedIn profile to target freelance/project work as well.

Part 3: Start Applying for Jobs and Engaging Your Network

Now you can begin to search for jobs, projects, freelance work through the many job boards out there. There are also job boards that focus specifically on freelance and project work. However, if you start your search by looking for positions, you are likely to get sucked into the black hole of every company's Applicant Tracking System. Instead, resist the temptation to apply for That Job because it is Just Perfect for you. To find real employment, you need to connect with a real human. 85% of jobs are found through a 1st or 2nd degree connection. I don't know what the percentage of jobs are filled through traditional online applications, but it ain't pretty.

Looking at the possibilities for your area of functional expertise or experience, identify geography, work environment, and work focus you might want to explore further. Using the sample below, write in the description of the type of company or organization you believe you would like to target for employment. (Templates for these trackers can be downloaded here [\[link pending\]](#))

Priorities	Culture	Geography	Stage of Growth	Industries	Role:
-Culture -Product -Curiosity -B2B world	1- Growth culture 2 - Innovation 3 - Passion about excellence, promises, & commitments 4 - Work Practices 5 - Creative / Unrestricted Casual 6 - Purposeful Diversity & Inclusion	1 - Boston, East Coast 2 - Global presence	1 - 25 - 500 employees 2 - Pre-IPO, B or C stage of financing	1 - BioTech 2 - Pharma 3 - Ed Tech 4 - Fintech	TBD

Priorities	Culture	Geography	Stage of Growth	Industries	Role

Target Companies:

Based on the profile you've put together, begin identifying companies that fit the profile AND where you have at least one 2nd degree connection. Begin trying to identify other contacts at these companies through your first degree connections. Work through your network to see if you can get entered into the company's employee referral system, or at least have a connection you can contact if you apply for a position. Many career sites let you set up notifications for job postings that might fit your background. This approach: focusing on companies where you have human connections, is much more likely to result in interviews than blindly applying for positions where you have no connections.

Company	Culture	Geography	Stage of Growth	Industries	Role	Culture
Co. #1	Rate 1-5					

Job hunting is a full-time job. If you are still working, plan to spend at least a part-time job's worth of hours on your search, at least 10-15 hours/week. If you are not working, divide your time between the job search and developing or building an alternative income stream, depending on your ultimate objective. If you're hoping to go free-lance full time, you may be only looking for a job that can sustain you while you build your business, so spend 25-30 hours per week on that and 15-20 on your job search. If you ultimately are looking for regular full-time employment, spend at least 30 hours per week on your job search, and 10-15 hours per week developing an alternative way to generate income (teaching, consulting, gig work, etc.)

Adrienne and I both recommend tracking your progress. During my own job search, I kept a log of every position applied for, follow-up, result, and the recruiter's name (especially if they were a retained search recruiter contracted by the company to fill a specific position).

Adrienne's tracker for Networking:

Category	Industry	Company	Person	Title	Message Sent	Call Date	Upcoming To Do	Contact Via	Notes	Goal for Reaching Out)
Peer										
Leader										
Connector										
Resource										
Hiring Contact										

Adrienne's tracker for applications submitted:

Location	Industry	Company	Title	Salary	Link	Connections	Applied	Date Applied	Notes

Meet at least weekly with your Posse Career Coach to discuss progress, and because having someone who will hold you accountable for doing the work is vital. It's easy to get distracted without specific tasks and objectives to meet each week, and unless you have superhuman self-discipline, being accountable for completing these tasks is one of the only ways you will be able to maintain your focus and your aim. Especially once the job hunt drags on into a month or two—or six—it will be difficult to stay motivated and positive. Set realistic and measurable goals with your coach: reach out to 10 LinkedIn connections every week, Apply to a minimum of 5 positions (or 10 if you aren't working and are in a full-time job search) and send emails to the connections for those companies. Attend two professional association events this month. Schedule and have a phone conversation with two new

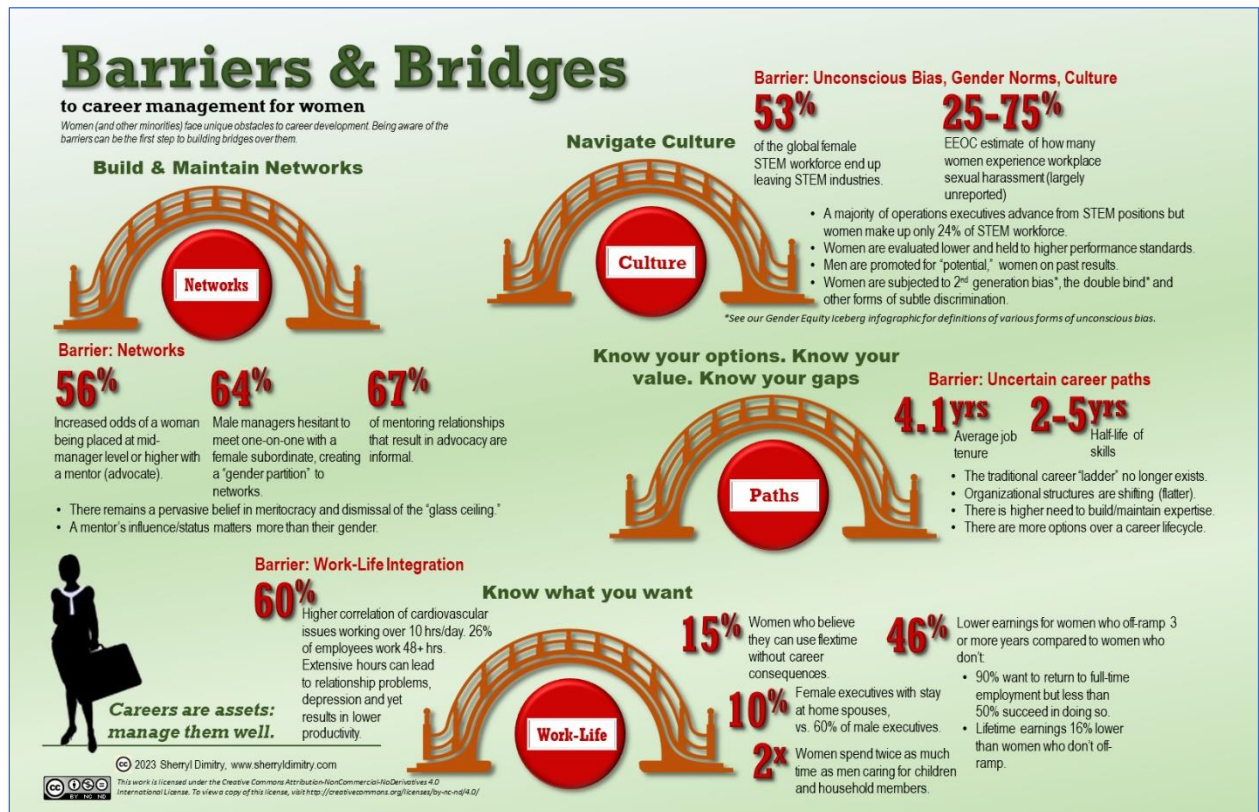
connections to learn about their work every week. Read one of the books on the Suggested Reading list (see Appendix) and share your reflections with your Posse and keep them informed of your job search progress. Make sure they have either your Master resume or the custom resume they are most likely able to support you with as an advocate.

Assignment 6: Manage Your Career

Read “Week 6” in *Six Week Career Makeover*

Download the full Barriers & Bridges infographic and consider some of the barriers and obstacles you have experienced in your career. Some might be internal (confidence) and others cultural (unconscious bias.)

Working with your coach and your broader Posse, discuss ways you can build bridges over the career obstacles and barriers you have experienced in the past.



My Biggest Barriers	Bridges to Build

APPENDIX



Appendix I: Resume Format

Use the resume format outlined below. Resume “rules” change over the years and the format below is used currently by the largest outplacement firm in the US as well as some of the top job search Influencers on LinkedIn.

Your resume should be a maximum of 2 pages, although you can stretch to 3 pages if your career has been longer than 10-15 years and you have other accomplishments, publications or recognition to include. Unless you’re a brand-new graduate with no experience, a 1-page resume will not be adequate. The only exception is if you are aware of a specific requirement or standard expectation in your particular field or geography.

First Lastname

City, State | email | phone

(do not include street address, make sure email is professional, not cutesy)

Summary: Write this LAST. It should be 3-5 lines saying who you are and the key value you bring to the employer (proven/demonstrated in experience section). This has to be written targeting either a specific job posting or a target job title. Write in the third person. HR Influencer Liz Ryan promotes using “I” statements and first-person writing. If you feel strongly about it, limit first-person narrative to this section only, or your resume may be overlooked by traditional recruiters. The goal is to sound human and unique. You’ll feel more prepared to write this after you get through the rest of the resume. If you are targeting a position you’ve never held, add that objective here.

Technical or Functional Expertise: (optional section). List only what is relevant to the target position (e.g., Microsoft Office, SAP, CRM, or a general professional skill like client development, etc.) This section can be very helpful to adjust for gaps in direct experience, but make sure you include a supporting bullet in the Experience section!

Experience: Reverse chronology. Most recent position first. List self-employment, even if part time, if it explains a gap in regular employment. Do not list whether work was part time or full time.

Title, Company, years (do not list months)

One-line description of company if not an easily recognizable and well-known name (optional if it is)

3-5 bullets describing the accomplishments (***not the responsibilities***) most aligned with job posting or standard for a target position (e.g., sales target surpassed, efficiency improved on a process, etc.) in this format (no more than 2-3 lines):

State the result or accomplishment (e.g.: Built and improved customer relationships...). State how you achieved it/the action you took (e.g.: ...by focusing on follow up and issue resolution).

Education (and any relevant certifications):

Unless you have no job experience at all, the education always goes last.

Degree, School. Spell out the degree, followed by abbreviation: *Bachelor of Science (BS)*

Only list your major if it is relevant to the position. Do not list year graduated unless it’s less than 1 yr.

Certification. List Certifying Organization. Only list year if it is renewable or requires re-certification for a professional field.

Professional Development:

Additional college coursework (non-degree related), professional training relevant to the target position. List the school or organization where you completed the classes but not dates. Include CEUs (Continuing Education Units) or CPE (Continued Professional Education) hours if applicable.

Community Involvement/Volunteer Work

Only list if it will show alignment with a hiring company’s stated values.

Appendix 2: Use your STAR stories to prepare for interviews

Practice interviewing with your Posse Career Coach using some of the sample behavioral interview questions below. Your coach may even do a search for some additional questions, so the best advice for preparing for interviews is to have a handful of your STAR stories that can be adapted to focus on a specific topic.

AI Prompt: Upload the Job Posting you are interviewing for to your AI tool. Ask AI to tell you 5-10 likely interview questions you can expect during the interview. AI will give you more targeted practice questions than these general questions below.

Tell Me About Yourself: Almost every interview starts with a question similar to this. Work with your coach to develop a short (no more than 3-4 minutes) summary of your background and how that experience will translate to the position for which you are interviewing.

Typical Behavioral Interview Questions

Decision Making and Problem Solving

Describe a situation in which you used good judgment and logic to solve a problem.

Give me an example of a time when you had to be quick in coming to a decision.

Leadership

Have you ever had trouble getting others to agree with your ideas? How did you deal with the situation, and were you successful?

Describe the most challenging group from which you've had to gain cooperation.

Motivation

Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.

Give me an example of a situation in which you positively influenced the actions of others.

Communication

Describe a situation in which you were able to communicate with another individual who did not personally like you (or vice versa).

Describe a time you had to use written communication to convey an important argument or idea.

Interpersonal Skills

Give me examples of what you've done in the past to nurture teamwork.

Give an example of an unpopular decision you've made, what the result was and how you managed it.

Planning and Organization

When scheduling your time, what method do you use to decide which items are priorities?

Describe how you've handled a sudden interruption to your schedule.

Questions to ask Interviewer(s)

Questions for Recruiter:

New position or vacancy? (If vacancy-why?) Any internal staff considered for position?

Your history/experience with company, hiring manager? What is your understanding of your client's priorities for this position?

What are the most immediate challenges of the position that need to be addressed in the first 3-6 months?

Questions for Hiring Manager:

The company

What do you see ahead for the company/industry in the next five years?

Biggest challenges you are facing in next year?

Overall structure: traditional or matrixed? Mixed?

How can new employees become familiar with, and begin to contribute to, the culture you've developed here?

What's the most important way that your company differentiates itself from competitors?" (Focus the question on the particular industry you're in, showing that you're knowledgeable about the company and its sector.)

What are a few of the most important challenges that the industry is facing, and how is your company going to approach them?

What might I do to add the greatest value to the business?" -- followed by, "What kinds of things can I do to prepare myself for the job?"

The position's history

New position or vacancy? (If vacancy-why?) Are any internal staff being considered for position?

Why was the position created, and what gap is it designed to fill?

The department

What is the overall structure of the company and how does the position fit the structure?

How do you view your group/division/department?

Direct manager:

What do you love most about working here? What makes you stay with this company?

What will I like best? What will I find challenging?

Leadership style preference. Directive? Supportive? Flexibility?

What are your highest priorities for your work right now?

Non-negotiables (values, etc)

Receptivity to ideas, challenging feedback. Willingness to support development of key relationships.

The expectations

What are the most immediate challenges of the position that need to be addressed in the first three months?

What traits does a person need to be successful here?

The next steps

If I could add/change anything about myself or experience to make me a better fit, what would it be?

What are the next steps in the interview process?

Appendix 3: Suggested Reading

Let Your Life Speak: Parker Palmer

Palmer writes about one's "daemon" or inner genius. What he writes about is identifying and "naming" that primary essence of yourself, not your career, not your "calling" as much as *who you are* at the core. He occasionally slips into conflating "essence" with vocation or calling, but I'd caution you against trying to define "what I'm supposed to do" because you will default your focus on how that "purpose" should be manifested within your job or even in your career.

Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life, authors Bill Burnett and Dave Evans

In *Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life*, authors Bill Burnett and Dave Evans take the knowledge of design thinking developed at Stanford University and apply it to your personal life. Design thinking takes a systems view of a "whole" that is "more than the sum of its parts" and looks at the interrelationships, complexity, and evolutionary capacity of open, adaptive systems. They suggest you start by defining your "workview": "What is work to me? Why do I want to work? What defines 'good' or worthwhile work?" Then, define your worldview: "What is my view of life? What values matter most to me? What experiences give my life meaning?" These two views, the authors suggest, help define your "true north."

The Good Enough Job: Reclaiming Life from Work: Simone Stolzoff

"Follow your bliss," and the quote "do what you love, and you'll never work a day in your life" have become work mantras. But as Stolzoff wrote: "Expecting a job to deliver transcendence creates a massive opportunity for disappointment." She also noted if someone asks "what do you do?" we translate that question to "who are you?"

The Great Work of Your Life: Stephen Cope

Stephen Cope writes about several "geniuses," including Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, and other, more contemporary, famous people and artists like Rosa Parks and Judy Garland.ⁱⁱ Walt Whitman was a Civil War army nurse. Henry David Thoreau did construction work and farming to support his writing habit. As a matter of fact, Thoreau's mother would routinely bring him food and do his laundry while he was "roughing it" on Walden Pond (about a mile up the road from his parent's home). Sometimes we have to work to support our calling. Judy Garland and Marilyn Monroe had enormously successful careers—and equally famous tragic personal lives.

Appendix 3: Keep Growing

Read “Week 6” in *Six Week Career Makeover*

Work with your Posse Coach to identify just one or two areas where you want to develop. They could be either “horizontal” skills development or “vertical” leadership development or transformational behavioral changes. Write down the specific Formal learning, learning through others, experience/practice actions you will take, plus additional coaching and development actions for transformative learning. Decide how you will receive feedback on progress and the timeframe of your plan (e.g., six months, two months, a year),

Tools, Approaches & Methods for Development

Knowledge (industry, business), Functional & Technical Skills & Competencies	Leadership Competencies Behavioral, interpersonal and cognitive competencies
<p><u>Formal Learning:</u> Online (Company LMS) and/or classroom courses MOOCs, workshops, local/online schools Reading (books, industry articles, etc)</p> <p><u>Learning through Others:</u> Peer coaching, demonstration, job shadowing and/or observation Knowledge sharing, communities of practice.</p> <p><u>Learning by Doing:</u> Request Feedback on specific skills or competencies you are developing from peers, co-workers, your manager. Keep a Learning Journal to capture and reflect on what you are learning from others and from doing the work.</p>	<p><u>Formal Learning</u> (see left column) only for introduction to new concepts and perspectives.</p> <p><u>Obstacles to Change:</u> Start with an “Immunity Map” to uncover competing objectives and hidden assumptions when old behaviors don’t change (best with a coach or mentor with whom to reflect and discuss)</p> <p><u>Peer Coaching:</u> pair with a trusted peer or co-worker to talk about efforts to improve specifically identified leadership competencies. Support each other with feedback. Use a mentor or trusted superior to solicit feedback and suggestions for improvement.</p> <p><u>Learning or reflection journal</u> (this can be an “old school” spiral notebook or a structured online tool).</p> <p><u>Growth experiences identified by CCL (2015)*:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Heat Experience.” CCL identifies a “heat” experience as a time “when you are confronted with a task or assignment that has the following conditions: 1) it is a first time experience. 2) Results matter. 3) There is a chance of success and failure. 4). Important people are watching and 5) It is extremely uncomfortable” (p.7). The best of these include: Increase in scope, turnaround, horizontal move, new initiative. • New Perspectives. Experiences here include having to deeply experience alternative perspectives, learning to manage polarities, develop systems thinking. • Elevated Sense-making: Experiences here focus on learning from others with higher-level thinking and interpersonal skills (could be a mentor). <p>Continued...</p>

	<p><u>Internal & External Development Opportunities</u> Experiential/interactive leadership development programs (provides new perspectives, time and space to dialogue and reflect, and often opportunities to receive feedback).</p> <p><u>Professional Coaching</u> 360 Feedback (Managers and up) to uncover blind spots and identify areas for further development</p> <p><u>Personality/Leadership assessments:</u> at Contributor or Manager level to gain understanding and awareness of the styles, perspectives and traits of others in order to appreciate and integrate differences</p>
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Horizontal (Skills, Functional Competencies) Development Plan Sample:

Example 1: Improve development of content and delivery of presentations	
Learn it! (10%) Formal Learning/Self-study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation Skills Online Training - Read "Presentation Zen" and "Talk Like TED"
See it! (20%) Learn from Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observe my manager during her presentation. Take notes about style, content, speaking, etc. - Ask to help my manager prepare her regular presentation - Interview 2 people whose presentations I really liked about how they learned to prepare presentations and become effective speakers.
Practice it! (70%) Practice/Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask a peer for feedback on my XYZ presentation - Join Toastmasters and attend/participate at least 75% of meetings for one year. - Deliver at least 3 work presentations and solicit feedback.

Your Horizontal (Skills, Functional Competencies) Development Plan:

Example 1: Improve development of content and delivery of presentations	
Learn it! (10%) Formal Learning/Self-study	
See it! (20%) Learn from Others	
Practice it! (70%) Practice/Experience	

Vertical (Behavioral, Interpersonal, Cognitive Complexity) Development Plan Sample:

Development Objective	Action Steps	Development Resources	Success Measures	Target Date to assess progress
Be less defensive when an idea or my work is challenged.	Reflect and identify what "triggers" my defenses. Identify the root belief and thought process that drives my triggers. Work with my coach and mentor to help reframe my belief and thinking.	Direct Manager, Trusted senior leader, Posse.	I can describe what triggers my feeling defensive and identify the thinking or belief that drives the default behavior.	10/01/2023
	Solicit feedback from my team and peers. Ask for their support to flag when I'm getting defensive.	Specific names here	I can listen to feedback with curiosity and an interest in learning about myself.	09/01/2023

Vertical (Behavioral, Interpersonal, Cognitive Complexity) Development Plan Sample:

Development Objective	Action Steps	Development Resources	Success Measures	Target Date to assess progress

Appendix 6: Resume Action Verbs

Communication/People Skills

Addressed	Advertised	Arbitrated	Arranged
Articulated	Authored	Clarified	Collaborated
Communicated	Composed	Condensed	Conferred
Consulted	Contacted	Conveyed	Convinced
Corresponded	Debated	Defined	Developed
Directed	Discussed	Drafted	Edited
Elicited	Enlisted	Explained	Expressed
Formulated	Furnished	Incorporated	Influenced
Interacted	Interpreted	Interviewed	Involved
Joined	Judged	Lectured	Listened
Marketed	Mediated	Moderated	Negotiated
Observed	Outlined	Participated	Persuaded
Presented	Promoted	Proposed	Publicized
Reconciled	Recruited	Referred	Reinforced
Reported	Resolved	Responded	Solicited
Specified	Spoke	Suggested	Summarized
Synthesized	Translated	Wrote	

Creative Skills

Acted	Adapted	Began	Combined
Composed	Conceptualized	Condensed	Created
Customized	Designed	Developed	Directed
Displayed	Drew	Entertained	Established
Fashioned	Formulated	Founded	Illustrated
Initiated	Instituted	Integrated	Introduced
Invented	Modeled	Modified	Originated
Performed	Photographed	Planned	Revised
Revitalized	Shaped	Solved	

Data/Financial Skills

Administered	Adjusted	Allocated	Analyzed
Appraised	Assessed	Audited	Balanced
Budgeted	Calculated	Computed	Conserved
Corrected	Determined	Developed	Estimated
Forecasted	Managed	Marketed	Measured
Netted	Planned	Prepared	Programmed
Projected	Qualified	Reconciled	Reduced
Researched	Retrieved		

Helping Skills

Adapted	Advocated	Aided	Answered
Arranged	Assessed	Assisted	Clarified
Coached	Collaborated	Contributed	Cooperated
Counseled	Demonstrated	Diagnosed	Educated
Encouraged	Ensured	Expedited	Facilitated
Familiarized	Furthered	Guided	Helped
Insured	Intervened	Motivated	Prevented
Provided	Referred	Rehabilitated	Represented
Resolved	Simplified	Supplied	Supported
Volunteered			

Management/Leadership Skills

Administered	Analyzed	Appointed	Approved
Assigned	Attained	Authorized	Chaired
Considered	Consolidated	Contracted	Controlled
Converted	Coordinated	Decided	Delegated
Developed	Directed	Eliminated	Emphasized
Enforced	Enhanced	Established	Executed
Generated	Handled	Headed	Hired
Hosted	Improved	Incorporated	Increased
Initiated	Inspected	Instituted	Led
Managed	Merged	Motivated	Navigated
Organized	Originated	Overhauled	Oversaw
Planned	Presided	Prioritized	Produced
Recommended	Reorganized	Replaced	Restored
Reviewed	Scheduled	Secured	Selected
Streamlined	Strengthened	Supervised	Terminated

Organizational Skills

Approved	Arranged	Catalogued	Categorized
Charted	Classified	Coded	Collected
Compiled	Corrected	Corresponded	Distributed
Executed	Filed	Generated	Incorporated
Inspected	Logged	Maintained	Monitored
Obtained	Operated	Ordered	Organized
Prepared	Processed	Provided	Purchased
Recorded	Registered	Reserved	Responded
Reviewed	Routed	Scheduled	Screened
Submitted	Supplied	Standardized	Systematized
Updated	Validated	Verified	

Research Skills

Analyzed	Clarified	Collected	Compared
Conducted	Critiqued	Detected	Determined
Diagnosed	Evaluated	Examined	Experimented
Explored	Extracted	Formulated	Gathered
Inspected	Interviewed	Invented	Investigated
Located	Measured	Organized	Researched
Reviewed	Searched	Solved	Summarized
Surveyed	Systematized	Tested	

Teaching Skills

Adapted	Advised	Clarified	Coached
Communicated	Conducted	Coordinated	Coordinated
Developed	Enabled	Encouraged	Evaluated
Explained	Facilitated	Focused	Guided
Individualized	Informed	Instilled	Instructed
Motivated	Persuaded	Simulated	Stimulated
Taught	Tested	Trained	Transmitted
Tutored			

Technical Skills

Adapted	Applied	Assembled	Built
Calculated	Computed	Conserved	Constructed
Converted	Debugged	Designed	Determined
Developed	Engineered	Fabricated	Fortified
Installed	Maintained	Operated	Overhauled
Printed	Programmed	Rectified	Regulated
Remodeled	Repaired	Replaced	Restored
Solved	Specialized	Standardized	Studied
Upgraded	Utilized		

ⁱⁱ Cope, Steven (2012) *The Great Work of Your Life: A Guide for the Journey to Your True Calling*. NY: Bantam Books, Random House Publishing Group