

CAREER DEVELOPMENTS

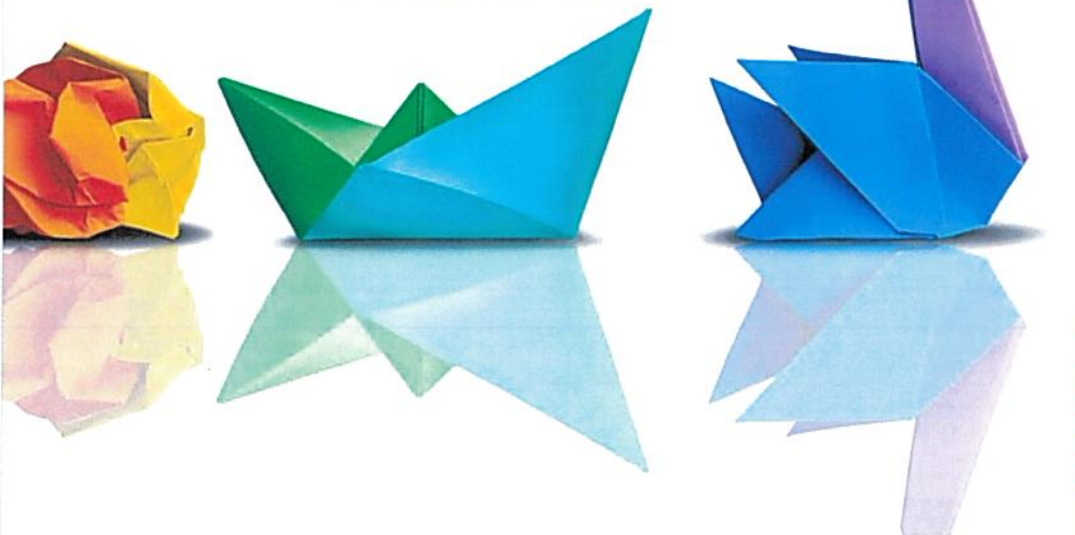
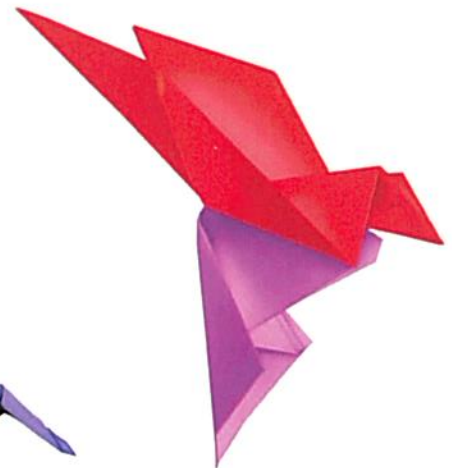
Adapting Career Development Strategies to Meet Changing Needs

Adapting to Disruption: Fostering Career Resilience

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Adapting to **Disruption:** Fostering Career Resilience

By Lynn Berger

During the last few years many of us have had to adapt to disruption in our own careers, as well as assist students and clients faced with disruption in their work. How can we best attain career resilience for ourselves and our clients?

Hybrid Work for Many of us is Here to Stay

The cat is out of the bag. Yes, it is advantageous to have face-to-face interaction with your co-workers but in some cases the advantages of hybrid/flexible work clearly out-weigh the advantages of in-person work. It is hard to believe how the world of work has shifted. I remember working with many clients over the years that were eager to ask for a day to work from home but were frightened and did not feel they even had the right to ask. They were either very burnt out or had a long commute that exhausted them or needed a day to work from home to deal with a home delivery or repair without having to take an entire day off. They were hard working dedicated individuals. Now employees and employers can benefit from this style of working. There are still many jobs that are not or are no longer remote and that is fine; yet, for millions of others a more creative and flexible way of working needs to be understood and accepted.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Affects our Work and Most of our Jobs Will be Exposed to AI in Some Way

To best adapt to AI-related changes one needs to educate themselves about how it may affect their position/industry and then prepare themselves as much as possible to meet the changes. AI is already impacting the future of work in America. A thoughtful approach and welcoming attitude can help one manage with the changes that will occur. Hopefully organizations will support their workers with extensive training to adapt to the technical and soft skills required.

We Can Classify Work Activities by Exposure to AI

The Pew Research Center conducted an analysis of the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) database and classified work activities by exposure to AI (Kochhar, 2023). The study focused on 41 work activities listed in O*NET and classified each as having low, medium or high exposure to AI based on the collective judgment of Pew Research Center analysts. This process resulted in the 16 activities judged to have high exposure, 16 more with medium exposure and nine with low exposure.

Careers resilient to AI are careers which involve to a significant extent the

creative problem solving in domains with scarce knowledge. These careers include the development of new knowledge, or work to get knowledge to the point that is sufficiently structured for AI to learn from it (Jureta, 2024).

Remaining flexible and eager to learn new technologies is key to career resilience. Below are some ways to best adapt to constant change and build career resilience.

Develop Patience

Many of us have been working at lightning speed and adjusting to the rapidly emerging ways AI affects our work. There has been much uncertainty and as most of us have heard, patience is a virtue, especially in times of stress and uncertainty. To make life easier and more manageable this might be a good time to strive for more patience with ourselves and others to build career resilience.

Our patience and career resilience can be developed when we intentionally slow down and become more mindful of our reactions and actions. It helps to understand what triggers us and attempt to *respond* rather than *react* to situations. Being responsive means taking a deep breath and not feeling threatened by the situation. As challenging as this period of time may be, it is also an opportunity to practice.

Well-Being Balance Sheet

Our well-being can be thought of as a holistic and comprehensive definition of overall health, obtaining a thriving lifestyle and encompassing a number of elements. I created the Well-Being Balance Sheet as one way to track your efforts. Respond to the questions below organized into eight well-being areas of your life.

— PHYSICAL HEALTH —

- Do you make time for preventative tests and doctor visits appropriate for your demographic?
- When you sense that there is something physically wrong do you seek professional advice?
- Are you getting adequate exercise?
- Do you get 7-8 hours of sleep most nights?
- Do you maintain a healthy diet?

— SOCIAL CONNECTIONS —

- How would you rate the quality of your relationships at work (e.g., co-workers and manager)?
- Do you have adequate time to spend with family and friends?
- How would you rate the quality of your connections to friends and family?

— CAREER —

- Are you satisfied with the role in which you currently work?
- Do you feel your work has meaning and/or purpose?
- Are you feeling burned out?
- Are your daily responsibilities feeling too burdensome?
- Are you feeling underutilized at work and unable to reach your career goals?

— RECREATION —

- Do you have hobbies?
- Do you make time for laughter or fun activities?
- Are you planning any travel?

— MONEY/FINANCES —

- Do financial concerns keep you up at night?
- Are you carrying excessive debt?
- Do you feel confident about your knowledge of financial concerns and the financial decisions that you make?
- Do you have goals and plans for retirement? Are you making adequate progress towards achieving those goals?

— EMOTIONAL HEALTH —

- Do you make time in your day/week to reflect or take care of yourself?
- Do you adapt or adjust to change in a positive way?
- When dealing with stress and anxiety do you have adequate coping strategies? For example, do you talk to others and actively work through your problems?
- Are you confident in yourself and the choices you have made?

— LEARNING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT —

- Does your job challenge you and provide you with development opportunities?
- Have you taken any classes or learned new skills in the past 12 months?
- Are there new skills or knowledge you would like to learn for personal enrichment or work?

— COMMUNITY SERVICE —

- How much time per month do you devote to community and civic issues?
- Are you aware of volunteer activities in your community?



Reflection and Self-Assessment:

1. When looking at the Well-Being Balance Sheet what do you notice?
2. What is getting in the way of you accomplishing more of the priorities in your career and personal life?
3. What is one change you can make to improve your well-being?
4. What information/resources do you need to help you achieve your well-being goals?
5. What support do you need and from whom to help you achieve your well-being goals?
6. How committed are you to reaching these goals?
7. When would you like to re-evaluate your priorities/goals to see how much improvement you have made?

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HOW CAN YOU REMAIN BALANCED AND HOPEFUL AS TO YOUR FUTURE?

1 FIRST

Set clear, reasonable, actionable value-based goals.

2 SECOND

Keep track and be accountable to either a friend, colleague or mentor as to your progress. If possible, brainstorm ideas that utilize your strengths with colleagues, friends, and mentors. Listening to inspirational stories/speeches (i.e. TED talks, podcasts, etc) can also be motivating.

3 THIRD AND MOST IMPORTANTLY

Take daily action on your goals. Strength builds on strength and action leads to action. Don't forget to celebrate your accomplishments, small or large!

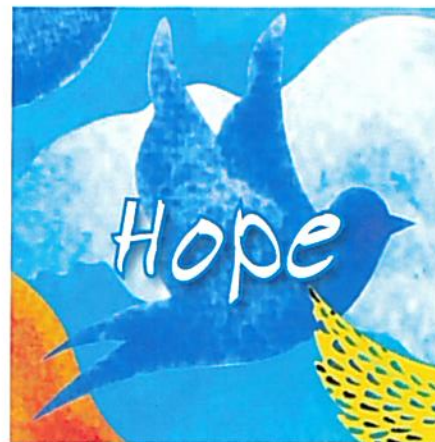
Leverage Your Strengths Wisely

We need to take control of our career path and learn new skills as the marketplace changes while leveraging our own strengths. We often hear and advise others to "maximize your strengths." Yes, however, if overused, a strength can become a weakness. For example, as an aid to self-awareness try describing your own strengths. You may possess diligence and do not give up easily. Sometimes, in your own interest, you need to know when to stop and move on to the next step or a new project.

Secondly, you may have a nurturing personality and be concerned about the welfare of others. Devoting a lot of time to their needs and concerns can sometimes prevent you from paying attention to your own personal needs and desires. Thirdly, in many instances, being assertive has many benefits. Yet, if overused, and you assume responsibility easily, you may sometimes be perceived as too assertive or aggressive. Try to pinpoint your sweet spot when a particular strength is working for you and recognize when it is not.

Enhancing Your Mental Fitness

Daily pressures are thrust upon us, and it can help to learn stress management techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and exercise. Make sure you make time for the things you enjoy and try to stay positive. Ask yourself what nurtures your health and spirit. Well-being is not a choice it is crucial to your strength and vitality! George Valiant, Director of the Study of Adult Development at Harvard Medical School in Boston, observed that within various groups studied over a 60-year period, some people became markedly more resilient over their lifetimes (Coutu 2002).



It is important to have gatherings and events to look forward to. During the pandemic, many people isolated themselves and realized that they needed to make an effort to connect with their friends and community. It takes time and planning yet, the rewards are there. During time spent with others, you will be glad you are there and feel better afterwards.

Taking classes, learning a new language, and playing games and puzzles are great ways to stay mentally sharp. This is not a lot to ask of yourself, however, you do need to make the effort and clear space in your day/calendar to participate. By paying attention and being mindful of these areas in your life you are taking control and will reap the benefits to maximize your mental fitness.

Maintain Hope as a Pathway to Success

As a career counselor and career coach who has worked with many individuals over my career, I wanted to share one last thought. My favorite word is *hope*. Hope is a feeling of expectation and desire for something to happen. Maintaining a hopeful attitude is crucial in our lives. This is especially true in times of stress, change, and turbulence.



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A complete list of references is available upon request from the author.