**My personal change plan**

*“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.”*

Aristotle

Taking a leaf out of the world of business strategy, let’s do a little personal ‘strategic planning’. A successful strategy always starts with analysis - in this case, a bit of self-reflection; an objective stock-take and analysis of how things currently stand right now. You will need to ask yourself a range of questions and your answers will need to brutally honest.

**CONTEXT**

**Q1. Why is this change happening?** In as detached a manner as possible, seek to understand what happened to bring about this change. Why did it happen and what can be learned from it?

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**Q2. Why is this change necessary or desired?** If it is change being done to you, put yourself in their shoes and seek to understand why the change is necessary. Try to stay impersonal and objective, however hard this may be. If you are the one instigating the change, articulate why this change is the right thing to do.

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**3. Broader Trends.** What broad trends are happening that are relevant to the change in question? Changes to your industry, changes to the way work is done, changes to the way we live, changes to society, … Make a list and do some research.

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**OUTCOMES**

 **4. What am I wanting to achieve?** What does good like for me? What is the outcome I want – financial and non-financial?

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**5. What are the implications of the change?** When I do make the change, what are the positive and negative consequences of this? For me? For my loved ones? What could I do to mitigate these implications?

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**SWOT**

**6. What are my strengths?** What am I good at? What are my key skills? What do I excel at? What do I do better than most? (Be honest. In fact, get some input from trusted friends, colleagues or loved ones if you feel up to it!)

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**7. What are my weaknesses?** What am I not so good at? Which weaknesses do I need to address? Which ones will I never be much good at? (After all, we can’t be good at everything!) Which key skills should I improve / sharpen them? What new skills should I try to develop? How?

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**9. Opportunities.** What are the potential opportunities that you may be able to engineer or take advantage of? Make a list and return to it frequently during the analysis and action phases below.

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**10. Threats.** If big change is being done to you, this will be easy. But it is good to be clear about them. What (external) threats could perhaps stand in your way? Write them down.

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**THE SITUATION**

**11. Key Success Factors.** What are the most important things that I have to do, develop or put in place for this to be successful?

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**12. Key challenges / obstacles to success.** What are the key barriers to my success? What are my key emotional barriers to change? How will I overcome them?

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**13. Interdependencies.** What key things do I need from others? How will I make sure I get it?

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**ACTION**

**14. Preferences.** What do I like and what are my preferred no-go areas?

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**15. What are my options?** Then, armed with the above analysis, you can start to explore some potential future scenarios. When first compiling this list, don’t bother yourself with how likely the scenario is – just whether it is plausible. Think of this exercise like an archery target; a bullseye. Start close to what you know and work outwards and see where it takes you.

**Analysis of each option.** Once you have made your list, you can then analyse each of the options – ask yourself what are the key challenges, key opportunities and key consequences of each scenario?

But beware of paralysis by analysis.Having completed your analysis (and it doesn’t need to be as detailed as the above!), at some point, you will have to make a decision. And when you do, be bold, make the leap and do your utmost to make it a success.

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**16. Quick wins.** What short-term wins/milestones can I do to demonstrate a sense of achievement and momentum?

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**17.** **Action plan and schedule.** So, what are you going to do, by when, in what sequence and when? It’s time for action!

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**18. Sustaining the change.** There will be hiccups along the way. The Change Curves will never be far away. What are you going to do to keep the momentum going?

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And lastly, remember that success often comes about after many setbacks. Thomas Edison failed countless times before inventing the light bulb. Although he saw it a little differently. When a reporter asked, *"How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?"* Edison replied, *"I didn’t fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps."*

