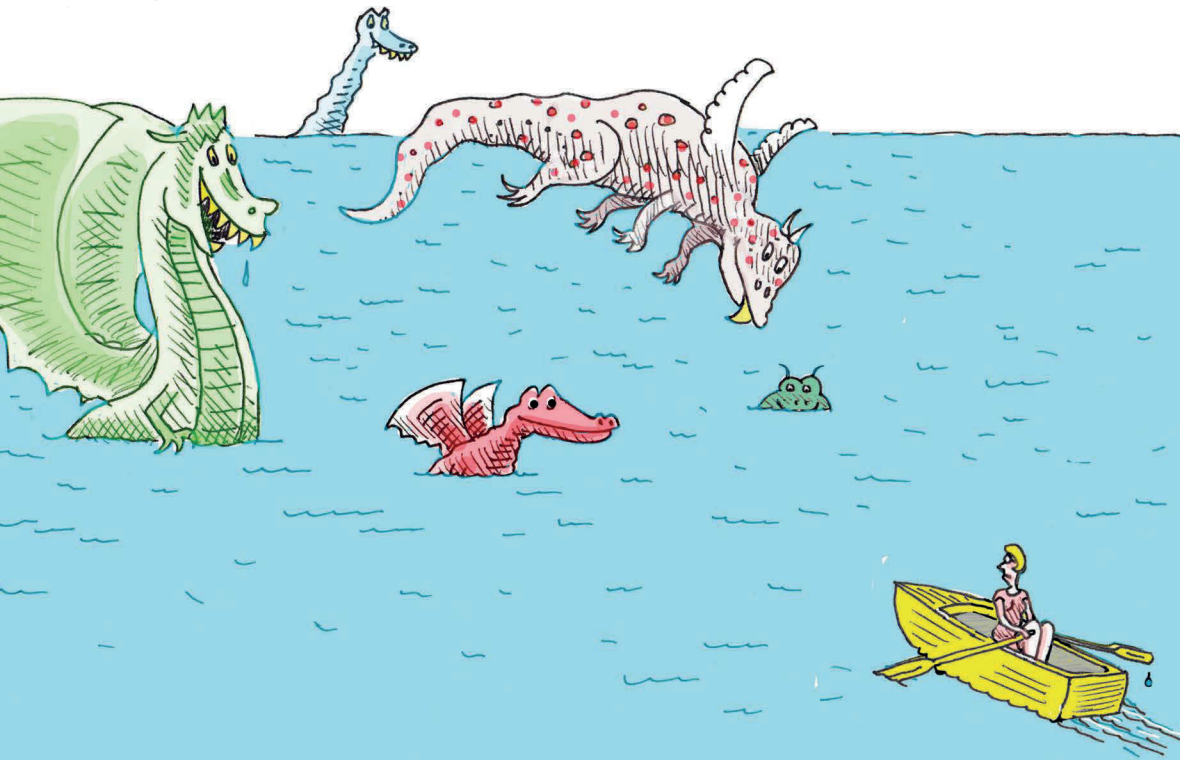


ALEX FORSYTHE WITH FRANCESCA FORSYTHE



THE PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT'S CAREER SURVIVAL GUIDE

Here Be Dragons

The Psychology Student's Career Survival Guide

The Psychology Student's Career Survival Guide is designed to aid students in identifying their ideal career pathway and imbue them with the right tools and skills to not only achieve their desired job but to progress and thrive within the workplace.

The first half of the book focuses on how to find and get a suitable job. The remaining chapters explore gaining success in the workplace in terms of personal growth, navigating criticism, workplace relations and the critical job assignments that every graduate should pursue. Forsythe, an experienced organisational psychologist, helps students recognise and apply the acquired psychological skill set to develop a personal brand, increase personal visibility and develop professional networks. This smooths the transition from university into the world of work by developing effective working practices that will support personal performance and that of the workplace. This book can also serve as a practical guide for academics looking to bridge the gap between the developing student at university and demands of their future employers. It explicitly calls for vocational elements such as communication, team-working, goal setting and planning within the curriculum.

This engaging book comes with an abundance of resources to support students' individual development and to help academics run workshops. These resources include tool kits which include self-diagnostic tools and strength finders, networking skill development, job search strategies, difficult interview questions, personal branding and so on. This is an essential text for psychology students at all levels looking for employability guidance and for psychology academics who are seeking supportive resources and guidance on helping students achieve their career ambitions.

Alex Forsythe is Professor of Applied Psychology at the University of Wolverhampton, UK; Chartered Psychologist and Chair of Europe's largest governing body for business psychologists, the Association for Business Psychology. Alex specialises in improving outcomes for high-stakes graduates in the fields of medicine, dentistry and psychology and has been awarded two national awards for outstanding impact on student outcomes and the teaching profession: the National Teaching Fellowship and Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

“An invaluable, brilliantly written book full of insight and original ideas for young people hoping to start their first job or already in business life. *The Psychology Student's Career Survival Guide* gives outstanding advice, tips and actions on how to advance your career in the modern workplace. There is a great deal to think about here. I cannot recommend the book more highly”.

— **Peter Saville**, *Fellow of the British Psychological Society, UK, and Founder and Chairman of the Saville Consulting Group and 10x Consulting, UK*

“The most fun I have had reading an academic text. An honest, entertaining and original resource that will help students with diverse career interests”.

— **Debbie Stevens-Gill**, *CPsych, SFHEA, University of Wolverhampton, UK*

“This book made the endless list of careers available to a psychology graduate less overwhelming; it offers a simple, less academic guide of how to tackle not only the usual obstacles one is faced with when job hunting, but the extra hoops you may have to jump through after the year 2020. It made me feel less alone in the idea that I have absolutely no idea what I want to do with my life”.

— **Ruby Allgood**, *Student, University of Liverpool, UK*

“This is the book we all need – a practical, research-based guide for psychology students to help develop and market your skills and get that dream graduate job, written in a light-hearted and accessible way”.

— **Julie Hulme**, *Keele University, UK*

The Psychology
Student's Career
Survival Guide

Here Be Dragons

Alex Forsythe with
Francesca Forsythe

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*For Craig
for teaching me to laugh again*



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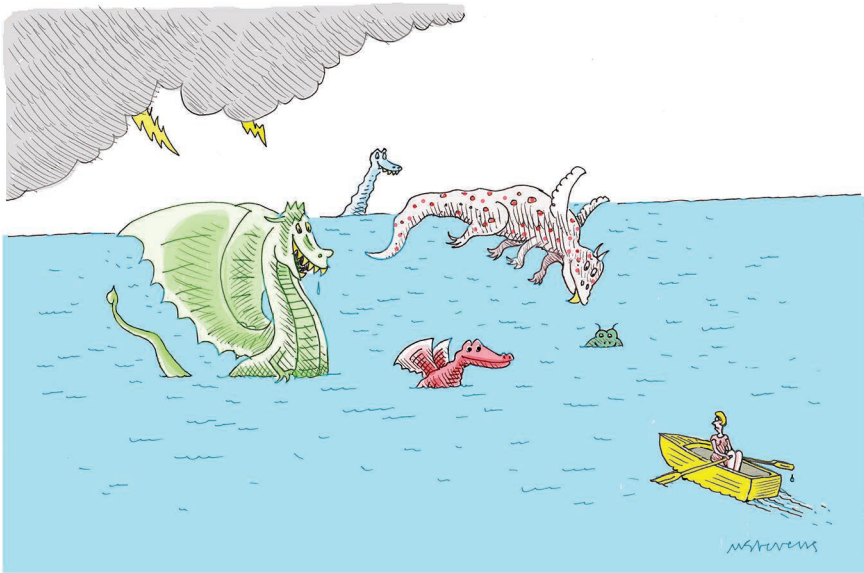


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Introduction



I once went for a job interview for a TV psychologist. They wanted some photographs (sigh). I would never describe myself as a stunning beauty capable of immediately capturing the imagination of a producer with my doe eyes and apple-esque cheekbones; after all, this was back before filters could help you achieve that chipmunk look we all crave. So this was really challenging to pull off: I am more than a little camera shy and, not having managed to shift some post-baby pounds [Francesca: *pretty sure I was about 5 by then mum, but OK*], I was just not ready for my close-up, Mr DeMille. After 30 or so minutes of pouting and posing with books and specs trying to pull off the stunningly beautiful and

2 ■ Introduction

intelligent psychologist look (with and without glasses, because we all love a good sexy secretary trope), I knew I needed another approach. I had an awesome pair of sky-blue Karen Millen sandals bedecked with blue and white crystal droplets. I really loved those sandals. I met my second husband in those sandals, and, unlike my second husband, I still have those sandals.

So, I painted my toenails and popped on the shoes. I watched an episode of *Sex and the City* to bolster my confidence, and then I emailed them a photo of my feet. I kid you not, the phone rang 20 minutes later, and I was asked to an interview the next week. I didn't get the job in the end, but I learned the value of thinking out of the box. Apparently Instafeet is now monetisable, and while I like to think I started the trend, I think I missed a trick.

My life and my career have been a series of misadventures. Having discovered boys (a recurring pattern throughout my life), I pretty much failed all my exams and wasted 2 years managing to get two A-levels, one in English and the other in guilt (I am Irish, after all; it is a cultural speciality). After rubbish A-levels and yet another bad boyfriend, my wise parents persuaded me that perhaps I might try to get a job. So, fresh with yet another broken heart, I managed to secure a job at Ratners the Jewellers. I loved my job polishing diamonds and dreaming of another Prince Charming. I worked hard, and the training and camaraderie were game changing. I was quickly promoted to assistant manager. All that ended thanks to Gerald Ratner's decision to speak at the Institute of Directors on April 23, 1991. *Thanks, Gerald, nice one* (google 'doing a Ratner')! However, I quickly found my new 'feet' in clothing retail management (and got me a husband, *yeah!*), but god, I was awful in that job. I was so awful that I gave permission to the then-Northern Ireland Royal Ulster Constabulary to raid the homes of my sales staff (true story). Perhaps not surprisingly to you, Dear Reader, it seems having the homes of your staff ransacked makes you about as popular as Jimmy Saville with Mumsnet. Not to worry, I quickly regrouped and managed to land a job at another retail clothing company, which promptly burned to the ground after a firebomb attack (*Northern Ireland eh?*). Then there was the job with the computer company that ended in a sexual harassment case (I was not the one doing the harassment #MeToo), the waitress job where I realised that it was not a good idea to use my fingers to put ice cubes into people's drinks (thankfully pre-Corona) and the job in the civil service processing DLA claims (zzzzz).

If Baz Luhrmann is to be believed, our choices are only half chance, and apparently so are everyone else's. But if you are making those choices on faulty, stupid, fake news to begin with, then no, Baz, your choices are not half chance. Your choices are dumb-ass mistakes that will play over and over in your brain. They will creep into your bedroom like Peter Spector (a.k.a. Jamie Dornan, and yes, some people might enjoy that). They will grab you, tie you up and proceed to strangle you whilst chattering and chattering to each other in your head until you make a larger, more dumb-ass mistake that blocks out the previous noise of the last mistake, which suddenly doesn't really seem all that bad anymore.

Professors are often thought to have some exalted life experience that creates the pathway to career success. There might be a few ‘chosen ones’ out there, but most of us got here through a combination of hard work, luck and fortunate misfortune. Fortunate misfortune is something that feels really awful at the time, but it sends you in a new direction. You just cannot really see what that direction is at the time. Fortunate misfortune usually needs a point of learning to be most effective. Yes, a lesson learned, an ‘I told you so’, a little ‘whoops a daisy’, a bit of ‘why on earth did I do that?’ or a really big “WT actual F”. Otherwise known as that cognitive place that we have to find, deep, deep down where nobody else can see. When we find that place, it will act as vehicle towards self-awareness, enlightenment or just ‘I am never f***ing doing that again, not ever’. Wherever and however you find your learning space, when you *do* find it, it will help you perceive, realise and then pursue your passions.

I definitely learned something from each of those jobs. At Ratners, I learned what really good management training looked like but also what truly awful publicity management looked like. In the civil service, I learned that people at work could get very territorial over minutiae but that the problems they were trying to tackle were much bigger than the size of someone’s desk space or filing cabinet. In the computer company, I learned that sometimes people are just arseholes, and in retail management, I learned that sometimes I could also be a complete arsehole. However, armed with all that life experience, I still never really reached a point of deep personal learning that was going to move me forward.

Stagnated and directionless, I visited the Careers Service. People often think that careers advice is just for school-aged kids, especially dishing out bad advice. Like the time my petite, hair extension– and acrylic nail–embellished eldest daughter was told she should become a farmer. Or when the career aptitude test of my youngest daughter (who had just set up her own freelancing company to fund her studies) came back with ‘Wife supporting husband in own business’. Really good careers services (they are everywhere) give brilliant all-age careers information, advice and guidance. They do not always advise a career in livestock management, trophy ‘wife-ing’ or serial killing, for that matter. Working for the Careers Service is possibly the most important job in the whole wide world, and if governments and universities placed value on career advice and spent time hiring and paying properly for brilliant careers advisors, then perhaps getting a great graduate job would be a much more certain outcome.

My awesome careers advisor pointed out that it takes some of us a few attempts to get things right (turns out this is very good advice not just for careers but also for husbands). My advisor also, with ninja-like purpose, was able to forensically track patterns in my values, my passions and my dislikes. She found inside of me things that I was only half aware of, creative thinking, a natural curiosity and a tendency to challenge the status quo or the commonly accepted. Most importantly, she persuaded me to stop thinking about the here and now and create a long-term vision for myself, and then she then suggested I study

psychology. My world was quite literally rocked, and my greatest love affair (with the exception of husband #3) began.

The psychology of getting an actual job

Husband number 3 (sometimes I call him the middle husband just to keep him on his toes) always criticises me for peppering every sentence with the word ‘actually’. Apparently, I sound like a perennially surprised Liam Neeson. ‘This is actually delicious!’, ‘That was actually a great movie!’, ‘You actually look very handsome in that new shirt!’, ‘That was actually funny’, when delivered with the harsh brutality of a Northern Ireland accent, makes everyone sit up and listen, be complimented for a nano-second, then feel insulted for the remainder of the evening.

[husband: There is no compliment in the word ‘actually’. You just make everyone sit up and be insulted.]

I digress. The point of getting an *actual* job in this context, instead of a fictitious, non-existent, fake, fraudulent, Leonardo DiCaprio ‘catch me if you can’ kind of a job is that your actual job should define your best version of yourself. Never sure why that phrase has caught on in the way it has. Seriously, who *actually* goes out and tries to be the worst version of themselves? I blame lifestyle coaches, those pesky neurolinguistic programmers and people who make personality tests that assign you as some random colour for the rest of your life. Lady with floaty scarf: ‘You are thistle’. ‘WHAT?’ ‘Yes, your colour is thistle. It is the colour that sank beneath your skin when your bruises surfaced to tell stories of the experiences you adventured through as a young and fearless child’. ‘*My god, it all makes sense now. I always thought I was heliotrope. But I am a thistle! I am an actual thistle! Now I can finally be the best version of myself. Thank you, floaty lady, Thank you*’. ‘You’re welcome. That’ll be £500 please’.

Anyway, back to the *actual* point. Higher education should make us employable – we all want graduate jobs, to earn a decent living, to be socially successful, to find something meaningful to do. When we are satisfied with the work that we do, we lose ourselves in it. We are compelled forward; we feel in charge and in control; we challenge and stretch ourselves, gaining new expertise, developing mastery and autonomy over the work that we do. Work is synonymous with fulfilment; it is an opportunity for social engagement and a way to feel encouraged and valued. Work makes our lives and the lives of others better; it offers financial stability and structure to our day. Work makes us, and to be without work is very damaging both to our mental health and our physical well-being.

Hardly surprising, then, that psychology is right at the centre of the world of work and remains one of the most popular degree choices both in the United Kingdom and across the globe. Studying the mind and how it dictates and influences our behaviour, from communication and memory to thought and emotion, is right at the centre of both the pleasures and the stressors of work. Psychology

helps us understand people and human behaviour and to use that understanding to systematically address personal and societal issues. Psychology students thrive in people-related jobs such as marketing, human resources, health and well-being but also in roles that require data handling and research expertise, for example, the legal professions, data science and ethics. For those reasons, psychology training is largely focused on areas that are knowledge intense.

Scotland is the only country in the United Kingdom that is explicitly required to support its higher education students in their transition to work. Universities in the rest of the United Kingdom are 'encouraged' (*read 'useless'*). This means that institutions are mostly free to decide how, and if, they should include structured work experience in their programmes.¹ However, most UK universities focus on developing employability strategies that centre on improving employer engagement for the identification of desirable student attributes for the future UK workforce. University partnerships with employers are the key to graduate employability, because the employers will provide more opportunities for students through the provision of opportunities to meet and network with prospective employers, graduate schemes, by promoting their vacancies through the university and by encouraging promising graduates to apply. Employers do not, however, have endless resources to partner with every university. It takes time and money to recruit good graduates, so employers will focus their efforts on a few select universities they believe will deliver the best candidates to them. Naturally, some universities are just better at attracting employers to their table (*read 'not useless'*), so the popularity of your university (or otherwise) means that significant diversity exists in the initiatives being employed.

During 2017, the student review forum Student Crowd asked students to evaluate their careers services. In times when it is almost impossible to engage students to complete surveys, the fact that 7,348 students gave up their time to comment on the quality of career support at their university speaks volumes about the value that they give to vocational guidance (Student Crowd, 2017). Universities that provided opportunities for students to gain first-hand experience in the world of work through initiatives such as internships, work experience, academic credits for meaningful work experience, job hunting and career coaching were rated as substantially better (*read 'useful'*). The message was clear: work experience matters, and good university career services play a pivotal role in developing entrepreneurial skills and commercial and business acumen, not only helping students on the road to their chosen career but also helping them to secure the part-time work that will provide them with financial stability throughout their programme of study.

These results are hardly a revelation. Students are not well resourced to know what options are open to them; even if they have an understanding of several options, they are not equipped to make meaningful evaluations between the many different career paths that are available to them. News flash: neither are the psychologists who have been teaching them. Presuming that every



psychology academic loves their career, then we can reasonably assume that they made at least some good choices based on the information that was available to them at the time. Having spent over 6 years at university studying for a degree and then a PhD, they understand the academic career path, but few understand very much else.

We don't know you

Even if your academic advisor could turn themselves into the psychology careers oracle, they do not know you. They do not know what you are like the way that you know what you are like. They cannot understand what your values are, what motivates you or, in the words of Marie Kondo, 'what sparks joy in you'. In other words, unless a degree has a specific vocational pathway, identifying the opportunities are not that obvious. This is all made even more complex by that fact that jobs just come, and they go. With the quantum leap that computers provided in the late eighties to early nineties, jobs came and went even faster. The job that you would love right now that seems perfect for you might not even be thought of, and the one that you have had your eye on may become obsolete.

It is hardly surprising that there has been considerable dissatisfaction within the academic community about the push towards 'employability-in-the-curriculum' which has forced disciplines to redevelop their programmes to include credit-bearing employability education. The advantages would seem obvious. Imbedding employability within the curriculum would have greater impact

because students would be required to engage in future planning directly with very intelligent people. Except that academics know little, in fact possibly nothing, about how to give useful careers advice. The end result is that students who are known to be strategic and instrumental in what they study for (and they tend to study for exactly what they believe they will be assessed on) would suddenly become engaged in planning for their future. Not because their approach to career planning would contribute in a meaningful way to their graduate outcomes but because they were going to be assessed by academics who were by now frantically ‘googling’ how to grade a résumé, CV or supporting letter and design an employability module.

One widely shared grading rubric awards points for ‘balanced’, ‘white space’, and ‘includes name, address, email’. Think about that for a minute? Students, you came to university to study psychology so that you can understand yourself and others, to grow and develop and refine your critical thinking. You can be awarded grade points just for putting your name and address on a ‘balanced’ piece of ‘white space’. When researchers at University College London discovered that the secret to happiness was low expectations,² I wonder if they meant that low.

That is not to say that there are not any number of dynamic and innovative initiatives in psychology departments. For example, in psychology, the shift towards authentic assessment has seen a reduction in standardised tests such as multiple-choice examination and an increase in assessments that communicate real-life tasks, for example, portfolios of activity whereby students are able to place all of their training, volunteering or learning experiences in an online repository; writing a position piece that develops the capacity to argue in one direction with the purpose of winning a debate; creating a blog analysing significant news events through the lens of psychology; designing a building (or even a town) based on psychological principles to support well-being or working with organisations on their real problems.

This book

This book will help you explore some practical ways in which to find a career that works for you. Key to success is flexibility, learning how to trust and follow your curiosity, find new opportunities for a happy job life and make a plan that supports good decisions. To help you on that journey, we have packed this book with research, practical advice, exercises, top tips, careers stories and advice from all of the psychology graduates whom I have had the honour of working with over the past 20 years. Thanks to the collective efforts of my family, this book is written with a substantial amount of Northern Irish tombstone humour, storytelling, straight talking and some light profanity (I like that; you might not). Thanks to Francesca ‘Rinder’ Forsythe’s efforts, we have toned down Professor Liam Neeson,

given this book a student voice and spoken directly to you, dear reader (*read 'easy to read'*) [*not only was I not allowed to write third person, she even made me remove the APA referencing style!*], but most importantly, very little time has been spent dwelling on how to be a forensic, clinical, occupational, counselling, super-duper psychologist. There are plenty of those books and resources available from the British Psychological Society, your university library and every psychology open day and careers fair around the country. Knowing your own tribe is one employability thing that psychology departments do fairly well. However, it is a flat fact that most psychology students do not go on to practice in the super-duper fields ($P < .05$). Rather they become superheroes in other cosmoses.

Chapter 1: what choice do you have?

There are something like 120,000 hours to fill across the course of our careers, and if we can find a job that we love, we are far more likely to make a success of it. There can be few things worse than spending that time in a job that we hate or, for that matter, working with someone who hates what they do. Of course, many people end up demotivated in their jobs, perhaps even hating them, but they stay in those jobs nonetheless. Most graduates are not burdened by the commitments of families and mortgages to keep them chained to jobs that they hate; rather, what keeps them in those jobs is that they still have not figured out what they want to do. Staying in a job you hate while you try to figure out your ideal career is, however, flawed thinking, because it stifles career discovery. The first part of this chapter explores the extent to which you are able to cope with ambiguity. Managing ambiguity is a key skill for career development; without tolerance for ambiguity, you will be unable to act without having the total picture, to handle risk, uncertainty and change. Tolerating ambiguity means being comfortable with not being totally sure where you are going.

The events of 2020 have made us all unwitting participants in the greatest ambiguity experiment of all time. We need graduates who can help us put our lives, communities, societies and countries back together, and the second part of this chapter is aimed to help you ground yourself to help make all that happen and more. Recognising what your values are and how they shape what makes you happy is a critical step in revealing to you how to make decisions, build relationships, decide on which company to work for and understand when you are not happy in your job. Values help us understand what we want to do rather than what we want to 'be'. It is not surprising, then, that some of the most successful organisations in the world have shaped the direction of their companies by discovering their core values, then centralising those values as key to their strategic policy. Here we help students unpick the foundations of their value system and to understand why some values matter more than others, to consolidate those values within the narrative of who you want to become and then to start to develop a strategy to use those values to guide relationships, decision-making

and choices about the kinds of organisations that you would ultimately like to work with.

Chapter 2: my psychology DNA

Students develop a host of skills in psychology: IT skills, critical thinking, ethical practices, research skills and analysis, for example. They also develop a corpus of knowledge around different theories in psychology and the epistemology of the values, methods and scope of those positions. Isolating nuanced skill sets from such higher-level knowledge, even expertise, and presenting it in a simplified format that maps onto the skills that employers are seeking, then framing this skill set as evidence to support the pursuit of a desired employment opportunity is an employability skill in and of itself.

This chapter will support students in identifying the skills and expertise that they have developed from their time in higher education and then applying this knowledge to a range of occupational settings outside of the core BPS practising areas. We delve into core psychological content and diagnosing how and where university learning experiences can be used to differentiate yourself from the other candidates to increase the probability that you will be selected. Employability, however, cannot just be about getting skills that someone wants to pay us for; it must also be about how we grow as human beings and how we care for each other and our world. It's ironic, of course, that sometimes these are the very things some people might not want to pay us to do, but they are central to our professional success because they provide us with a clear sense of where we want to be in life and the values we wish to stand for. These values are your 'brand', and a well-developed brand will distinguish you from the graduate 'sea of sameness'. In this chapter, we help students develop a framework for developing self-understanding that will help self-improvement, give clarity and a sense of purpose and yield pride from the work that they do.

Chapter 3: tell me what you want, what you really, really want?

Your personal brand is a way of marketing yourself to others, both online and offline, and can be a critical factor in convincing potential employers to choose you over the next person. We all know that your reputation speaks volumes before you enter the room, but it's almost impossible to overestimate how impactful it can be to make sure that your digital brand is both cohesive and professional, because, as the old saying goes, *you never get a second chance at a first impression*. Your personal branding mission is also more than finding a job: it's about portability. Having a great brand means you can move from university into employment, from job to job and across organisations, because it makes it easier for you to develop relationships, peer networks and customer bases who trust you. This chapter identifies branding pitfalls and best

practices – how to manage yourself safely and effectively but also how to leverage your digital presence to the greatest effect for your career.

Chapter 4: your personal brand

Only around 20% of applicants are accepted onto the traditional psychological pathways. Even if you have chosen this difficult route, the odds are stacked against you. If you do not broaden your horizons, you could miss out on valuable opportunities, and the earlier you broaden your horizons, the more of the horizon you will see. Exploration is key: developing an employability strategy and then a plan of action as soon as you leave your degree, if not, in fact, sooner. Serendipity is not a strategy. The best results are achieved on and with purpose.

Following on from the mapping of student skill sets and the creation of a personal brand, this chapter examines the search for employment, the tools and techniques for finding career opportunities and how to develop the social and cognitive skills that help identify opportunities and improve the ability to interact effectively with others. Personal interactions and social capital are explored. Social capital is the access to resources which are embedded in social relationships. Being able to extract the information that comes from social capital brings trust, status and opportunities which help both secure a position in the first instance and then help students continue to navigate and harness those networks for the value they bring to successful career progression. Building social capital is interdependent with building a career: the larger the network, the greater the probability of success. Some students are better able, however, to mobilise social capital resources than others, and this chapter explores the strategies that students can use to develop and maintain such strategically significant relationships.

Chapter 5: from applications to interviews that win

A well-crafted CV makes it easier for recruitment teams to identify how you meet job specifications and role criteria. However, the increased use of applicant tracking systems, or ‘résumé bots’, can mean that students suffer regular rejection without ever knowing why. It is important to take the time to examine the skills that you have and how they qualify you for the position you are applying for. Students often underestimate how time consuming this process can be, because to be successful, each CV and application letter need to be tailored to the position at hand. This chapter examines how to leverage your CV for job applications but also how to use technology such as personal webpages, blogs and social media to assist you in both the application process and the promotion of your personal brand.

Getting to an interview is a huge endorsement that you have met the advertised criteria for the position, and the interview is your opportunity to shine. The most successful graduates will have been thinking about and developing their interview personal narrative for many months before they even know they have a

job interview. In other words, how they can give richness to any answer by using particular examples of their experience to answer different questions. Just as in formulating an answer to an undergraduate essay, the worst interview questions are general and descriptive, and the best answers are rich, explorative and evaluative. This chapter will provide a foundation for the student's personal narrative: how to effectively draw on and apply their experience at the interview and how to use that narrative to harness self-confidence.

Finally, rejection is part of the interview process. We need to learn from rejection and move on. Some rejection is actually very good for you, and we will examine how it is possible to harness rejection in the correct way and avoid personal depletion.

Chapter 6: starting work: measure up and make a difference

Career progress also means going beyond the nuts and bolts of a job, its salary limitations and the daily grind of 9 to 5. Making a difference requires going beyond your job description, the routine of work or the immediate task. Making a difference means expanding physical and emotional energy towards the people you work with and the customers and clients you come into contact with. Part of this process is dealing with criticism; the more you do, the greater your reach, the more exposed you become to criticism. When you are doing things that others are not doing, then you are taking risks that others are not taking. If you do a lot of big things, then there is room for big criticisms. This chapter will help you develop strategies to traverse the murky waters of feedback, its negative connotations and the emotions that it brings. If you want to be successful, you need to learn how to deal with criticism and feedback. We will explore why we often reject feedback and how it is possible to better improve our management by recognising that feedback can be complicated. The anxiety and fear that come with feedback may override our normal behaviours and, in order to improve, we need to understand what our personal triggers are.

Chapter 7: good relationships at work

What does it mean to have good relationships at work? Does it mean everyone gets along? Does it mean there is never any conflict? Or is outstanding performance the hallmark of good working relationships? This chapter explores current thinking on work relationships, in particular the development of mutuality and equilibrium, which leads to mutual trust, respect and support. It aims to develop insights that will support effective interpersonal interactions, establish trust and develop personal credibility in peer, supervisory and management contexts.

This chapter also explores the ways in which poor communication can impact work efficiency, effectiveness and staff well-being. Poor communication is a

significant block to personal development, effective leadership and our overall effectiveness at work. Good communication skills are critical in strengthening our relationships with others, motivating individuals and teams and avoiding costly and time-consuming misunderstandings and disagreements. The factors that influence communication are examined, including how to generate a positive impression of yourself as well as understanding the potential significance of generational differences that may present unintended barriers to communication.

Finally, knowing what your boss, your team and your peers need from you is essential for good working relationships. Clarity about what results are expected from you reduces misunderstandings, blind alleys and poor decision-making, even accidents and sickness at work. Without understanding what results are expected, there can be no capacity for empowerment. Chapter 7 will help support the development of effective skills that are central to gathering the right information at the right time and then applying that knowledge to support both personal performance and the performance aims of organisations.

Chapter 8: influence and persuasion

This chapter examines how you can build on your knowledge and skills, your sense of yourself and your values to build your influence at work. We review the factors that influence people at work, exploring how to manage people who are influenced by evidence or those who are influenced by inspiring ideas, as well as identifying and removing barriers which protect your personal comfort zone. Building influence also means being understood effectively, using language that others will listen to, being respectful to our own needs and the needs of others, striving first to understand and then to be understood and recognising that communication begins some time before any personal interaction with others. However, influence in the digital age has changed how these principles are applied in everyday situations. Therefore, how to expand your reach of influence, how to communicate effectively to influence and how to share knowledge in a digital age are examined. Some individuals are influential because of the positions they hold, the ideas they share or their inspiring actions. Influence at work involves trust and reputation, personal leadership, resilience, being inclusive and being prepared to be wrong.

Chapter 9: chart your own course and set sail

This chapter examines why we should never rely on the skills and knowledge that we already have. The rate of change in the professional working environment places the employee under considerable pressure to keep up to date with advances in technology, developments in knowledge and new ways of working. The ultimate consequence of not keeping up to date with occupational knowledge is professional obsolescence. Careers are no longer a series of sequential activities,

roles or experiences. Either by choice or necessity, individuals may have one, two or three careers in their life span; they may move across organisational boundaries or between departments, hierarchical levels and skills. By continuing to develop expertise and new skills, knowledge and experience across your working life, you increase your personal currency. This currency will insulate your career from the forces of change so that it becomes possible to move with change rather than simply reacting to it. Key to charting your own course is to know well in advance where you are going, so we provide you with a list of the job assignments critical to landing that top CEO job.

So, without further ado, let us begin to learn about how to get a job and succeed at your career, and hopefully we can have a few laughs along the way.

Notes

- 1 European Commission. (2018). EACEA/Eurydice, 6.2.3, p. 236.
- 2 Rutledge, R. B., Skandali, N., Dayan, P., & Dolan, R. J. (2014). A computational and neural model of momentary subjective well-being. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. doi:10.1073/pnas.1407535111



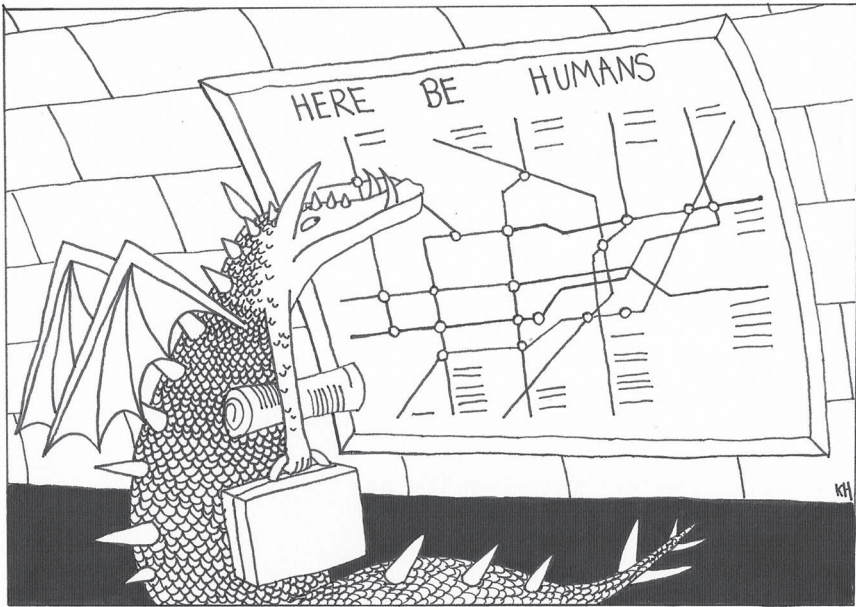
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Chapter 1

Here be dragons



Millions of years ago (circa 1500) in a land far away (England and Europe), fear was just a part of life. The things feared the most included (but are not limited to):

- Purgatory
- Witches