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Career Highs and Lows

Get a blank piece of paper and draw a line from left to right along the bottom. This represents your **timeline**.

Whatever year you had your first job (even a part time role while studying) write that on the left-hand side. Then on the right-hand side write this year. Mark out each year between then and now.

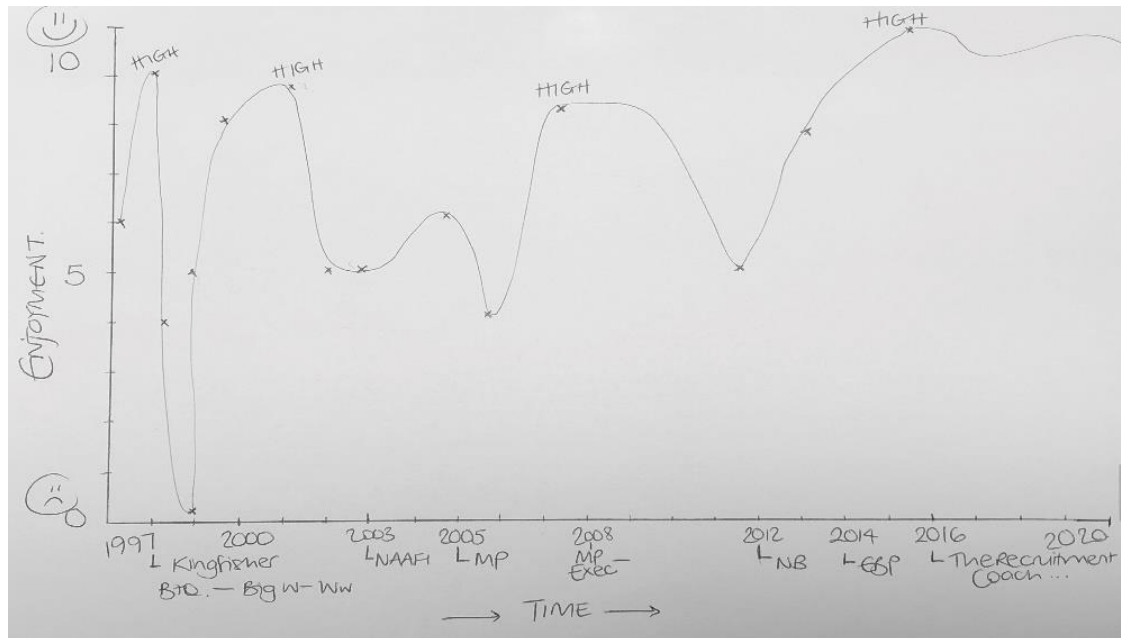
On the left of the page draw a vertical line (the y axis) and at the top label this 10, and the bottom 0. This is your **job happiness scale**, with 0 being you were miserable up to 10, you loved it.

If you have already completed it, it might be helpful to refer to your CV, or your LinkedIn Profile to help with the next step.

Next label the timeline with each different organisation you worked at and role you held. If you held more than one role concurrently, mark them both on. Perhaps you did a voluntary role at the same time as your day job, or you work in a sector that means you wear different 'hats' like being both a lecturer and a researcher.

Now, score your job happiness for each period of time. This may change *within* a role, for example if your boss changed, or the company was acquired etc. Mark them on and join up the dots.

Worked Example



For each of your top three **Career Highs** – the times you gave the highest score – complete the next stage:

Visualise yourself back then. Really picture it – the places you spent your time, the people, the regular activities you did. Using the prompts below, write as much as you can think of for each. Be specific and get into the detail. It may include things like the type of work you did, the way the team was structured, the culture, how people were rewarded, the work location or environment, the leadership, the atmosphere, how people treated each other, the customers you worked with, the purpose of the work, or something else.

Occasionally people don't have many career highs and haven't been fortunate enough to have lots of career joy. If that is the case for you, try to think about *parts* of the roles you enjoyed most – perhaps a project you were on or certain clients you worked with – and focus on these parts when answering the questions.

Career High 1:

I really enjoyed:

I was most proud of achieving:

I was energised when I was:

My favourite bits of the work were:

The feedback I got about myself then was:

People described me as:

Repeat this for any times you really enjoyed, ideally at least three.

Career High 2:

I really enjoyed:

I was most proud of achieving:

I was energised when I was:

My favourite bits of the work were:

The feedback I got about myself then was:

People described me as:

Career High 3:

I really enjoyed:

I was most proud of achieving:

I was energised when I was:

My favourite bits of the work were:

The feedback I got about myself then was:

People described me as:

Now for the **Career Lows**. For each period when you have scored your lowest score for job happiness, visualise yourself back then. As with the highs, really picture it – the places you spent your time, the people, the regular activities you did. Using the prompts, write as much as you can for each. Be specific and get into the detail:

Career Low 1:

I didn't enjoy:

I was disappointed by:

I was drained by:

The bits of the work I enjoyed least were:

The feedback I got about myself then was:

People described me as:

Repeat this exercise for all periods you would describe as a career low.

Career Low 2:

I didn't enjoy:

I was disappointed by:

I was drained by:

The bits of the work I enjoyed least were:

The feedback I got about myself then was:

What is really important to you in future roles?

What do you want to avoid in future roles?

Credit: Adapted from an exercise by Barefoot Coaching