

Energy UK Blog

Defining My Work & Life Vision - Food for thought

Unfortunately, we were unable to run our planned workshop for Energy UK as part of their 2020 International Women's Day celebrations focusing on "Defining My Work & Life Vision". We hope to be able to run it again in the future but for now here are a few tasters and some practical ideas for you to try.

Being a woman – food for thought

What does it mean to be a woman? At any one time you might be thinking about some or many of the areas captured in the image below....whether it's about having your voice heard, trying to be your authentic self, balancing home and work, trying to find a role model or mentor to support your development, dealing with limiting beliefs, imposter syndrome or your internal self-talk, confidence issues or health challenges....whatever you are thinking, feeling or facing there are many factors that are common issues for many women. What does that mean for you as an individual? What stands out or resonates with you when thinking about your work and life vision?



Thinking about all of these areas is a useful starting point to knowing ourselves and what is important to us right now, and it can provide a helpful backdrop to then start thinking about your individual work life vision.

My work life vision

One way to consider what you want your work life to look like is to go through this three-stage funnelling exercise which is designed to stimulate ideas and possibilities. Don't worry if you haven't got a clear goal in mind, this exercise will help to inspire your thinking, so just have a go and put all of your thoughts down.

Think about your goals & aspirations for your working life and then...

First - quick fire - write down all of the goals/ideas that come to mind - as many as you can think of including things you may have rejected or that seem impossible.

Next - describe what does success – personal and professional / happiness / job satisfaction look like for you right now AND for your future.

Then - take time to really think and focus on what's most important to you and start to define 1-3 goals for your working life.

It may be that you are happy with where you are now, and your goal is to maximise your current situation - this exercise will reaffirm that for you. Or it may be that you want to focus on personal development rather than a role change, or it may be that you have aspiration for a particular role. Your goal could be to have more confidence or to have a voice at work and in general. Make a note of whatever comes to mind.

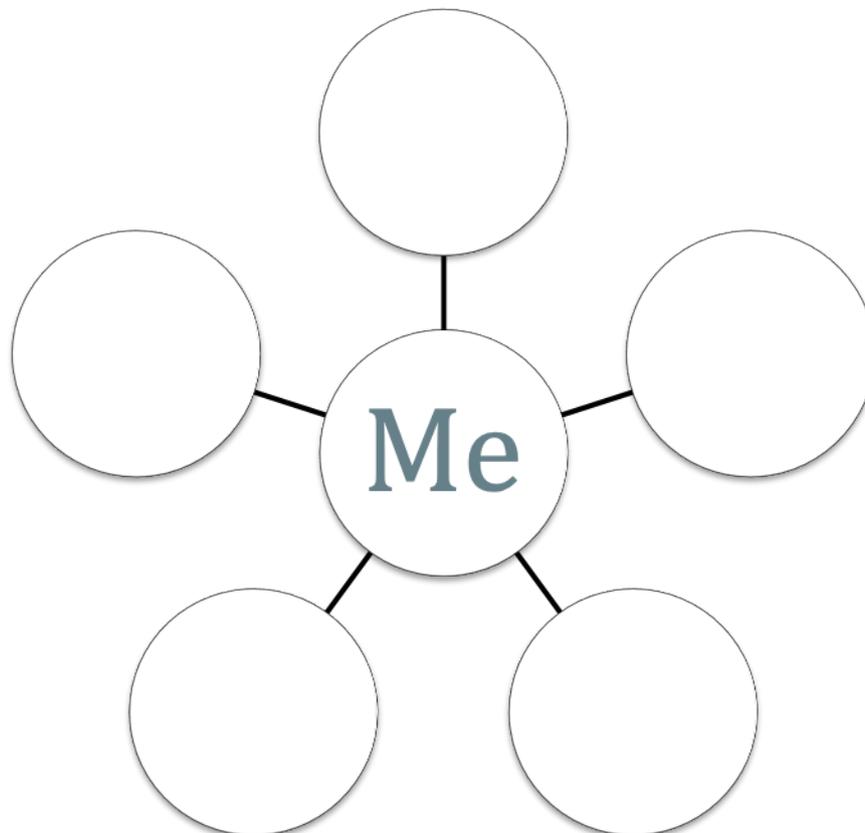
It can be helpful to talk through this exercise with someone else, share ideas and support each other.

Authentic me

Once you have a clearer picture of what success looks like for you and you have defined your 1-3 goals, it is helpful to consider what characteristics, strengths and skills you have, or you will need, to help you to achieve your vision. Here is a self-coaching tool to help; Achievements – “Transferable skills – defining me”.

1. List in the circles in the diagram below, 5 significant achievements in your life that you are most proud of. These achievements can be from your work or personal life.
2. Next to each achievement identify what were the key characteristics, strengths & skills from these achievements that you demonstrated that made you feel proud?

3. Consider all of the characteristics, strengths and skills you have listed for each achievement and write a summary list of the key aspects that define you.
4. How could you use these characteristics, strengths & skills to support you in your work / life vision?



When you think of 'significant achievements' remember to think about **what was significant TO YOU**. It could be a career achievement, a qualification, a sporting accolade, family related or it could be a difficult conversation you had recently that left you feeling proud of how you handled it, or maybe you supported a friend through a difficult time and that makes you feel proud. **The emphasis is on those moments that made you feel PROUD**, it doesn't matter what anyone else might see as your most significant achievements.

Sometimes this exercise can be challenging but we encourage you to give it a go – just start with one or two achievements – and build from there.

Once you have your summary list of the key aspects that define you, keep this list close and remind yourself regularly of all that makes you who you are.

Knowing yourself, your strengths and what makes you who you are when feeling at your best can make it easier to make decisions and to create a life that's right for you.

Work life balance

As work life balance (or work life blend, harmony, challenge, juggle or whatever you choose to call it!) is often an important consideration for women, we think it's an important issue to consider as part of your Work Life Vision.

Follow these steps to create your current and ideal work life balance picture.

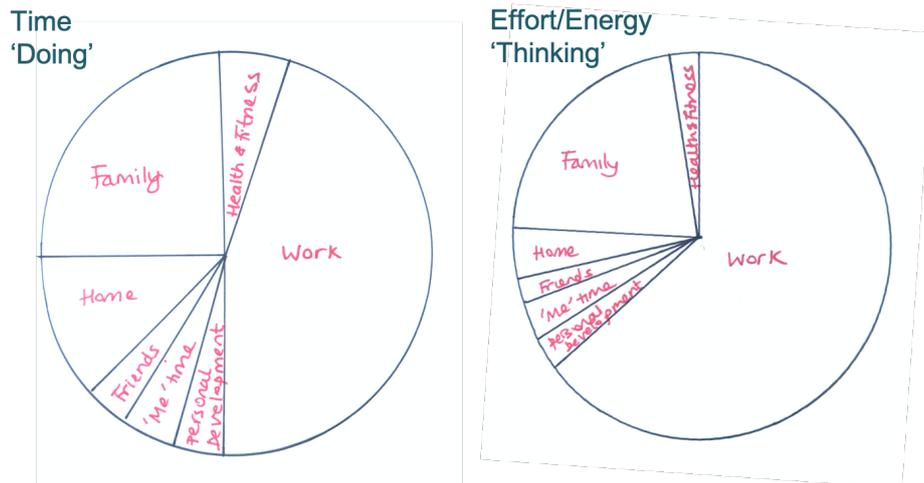
1. Identify key areas that make up your life – some ideas are listed below to get you started. Between 6 and 10 areas is ideal.
2. Put each of these areas onto a circle. Each of the key areas you have identified should be a segment of the circle – the bigger the segment the more time or effort and energy you are putting into this area of your life. This is your CURRENT picture.
3. Now do the same for your IDEAL FUTURE on a second circle. It's up to you to decide when this ideal future will be – 6 months, a year, 3 years or more – it's your choice.
4. Have a look at the two pictures and think about these questions? You can chat it through with a colleague or spend time thinking it through on your own:
 - a) Which areas are you happy with?
 - b) Which areas need changing?
 - c) What 5 things **could you do** to start to make the changes?
 - d) What **1 or 2 things will you now do?**
 - e) What other support do you need to make the changes possible?

Example key areas you could include:

- Work / Career
- Home / Household
- Family & relationships
- Children
- Friends
- Social / leisure
- Me-time
- Personal development
- Health
- Finances

You can look at this exercise based on time, or you can look at it based on effort and energy, or maybe have a go both ways and see what comes up for you. In the example below you can see that work takes up a lot more effort

and energy than it does in actual time – approaching the exercise in these two different ways can provide some interesting insights.



Making it happen!

To conclude, let's look at turning the goals into actions. So take your identified 1-3 goals and decide what small steps you can take to progress each of these goals. A useful starting point is to look at where you are on a scale for each goal and prioritise.

We hope you have found this blog useful, thought provoking and personally insightful and we wish you good luck on your personal & professional development journey. For more self-coaching tools visit our website or connect with us on social media. To find out more about Women to Work and the work we do email Emma & Jenny on info@womentowork.co.uk.

Happy International Women's Day.

Emma & Jenny,
Founders, Directors & Coaches, Women to Work
www.womentowork.co.uk
Working with women to define and create fulfilling personal and professional lives