

Career Timeline Exercise

Looking back to move forward

This activity and these instructions have been adapted from a tool first shared with the Free Agent program by Helen Daniels. I share it with gratitude to her and her ever thoughtful ways.

Career Timeline Instructions (page 1 of 2)

Step 1: Start with a piece of paper or blank document (landscape format works best)

Step 2: Add a dotted line across the middle of the page

Step 3: Plot your career or education points. You can go as far back as you need to.

- A good guideline is: will adding this experience help me identify something useful about my past experience?
- After reflection, add any positive experiences **above** the dotted middle line. The better the experience, the higher it should be plotted above the middle line. Do the same for any negative experiences but add them **below** the dotted middle line. *See slide 4 for an example.*

Career Timeline Instructions (page 2 of 2)

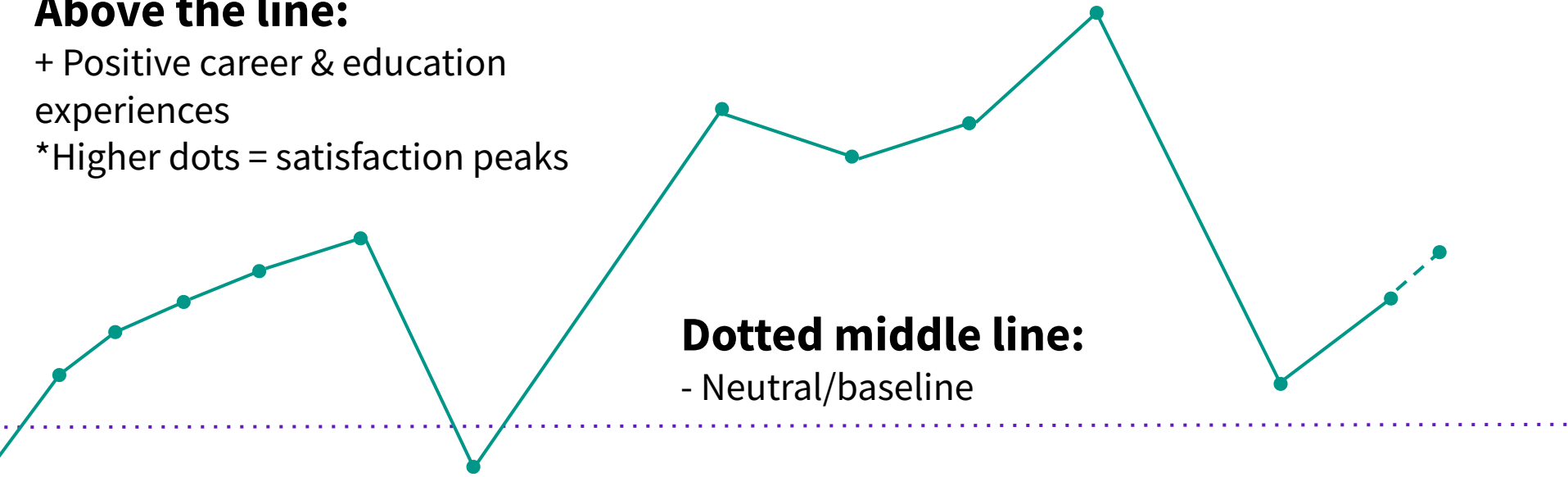
- **Step 4:** Reflect further on each experience. What was it about that experience that made it positive, negative, or neutral? Jot down everything you can think of for each point.
- **Step 5:** Look for similarities across your positives and negatives. What is the timeline showing you about what brings you satisfaction at work? What makes for a negative experience?
- **Afterward:** Use this tool as one guide to understanding whether an opportunity may be right for you. If you know what you value or need in the workplace, you can integrate questions into your interviews to help determine whether a job is the right fit.

Note: this is not a one and done tool. You can revisit it as often as you like to surface your values and needs and to determine if they have changed with time.

Above the line:

+ Positive career & education experiences

*Higher dots = satisfaction peaks



Below the line:

- Negative career & education experiences

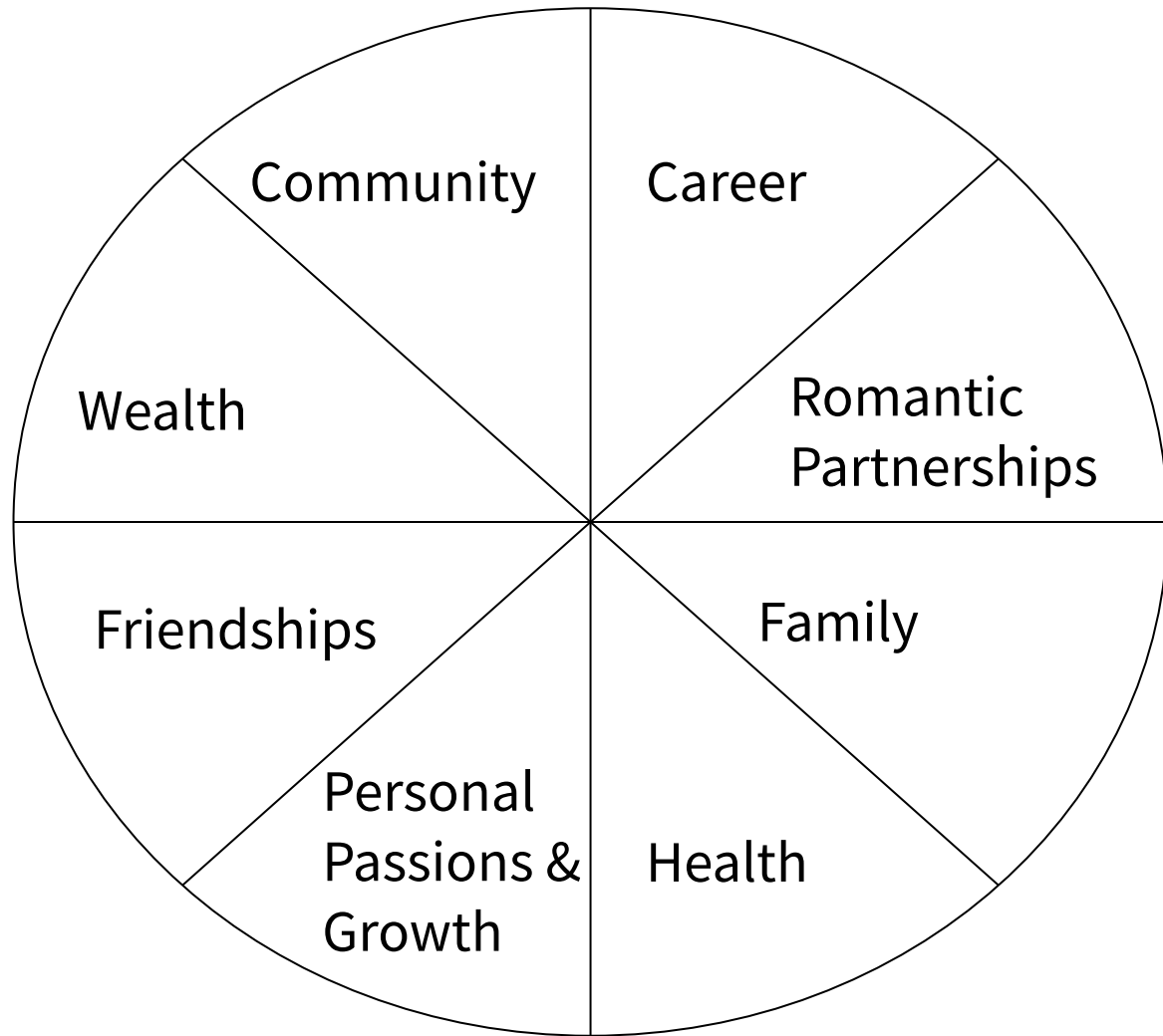
*Lower dots = satisfaction lows

EXAMPLE
Career Timeline Exercise

Wheel of Life Exercise

Taking Stock of your Current Needs and Priorities

The Wheel of Life exercise is a commonly used coaching tool. An online search will yield several examples you can refer to.



Wheel of Life Exercise

- What do you value most *at this point* in your life?
- Top priorities = where you might want to put your energy first
- Revisit as often as you need to as a self check-in.