



every  
woman  
WORKBOOK

# TAKING STOCK

making some time, away from the distractions of the day-to-day, to really focus on you and the next part of your journey.”

# About this workbook

At everywoman, we deliver a range of innovative products and resources that unlock the potential and talent of women in business globally. Whether you're just starting out, looking to progress your career, or even to build and develop your own enterprise, the everywomanNetwork provides a wealth of personal development resources, advice and inspiration to address the challenges you face at key stages in business. We produce workbooks on topics that matter most to our members and we're constantly listening to your views to give you the tools you need to propel you through your life's work, at a time and place that suits you.

## Welcome to our new workbook, Taking Stock.

We live in a world where disruption is the new normal. Driving forces like developing technologies, unforeseen global events and economic fluctuations have given rise to rapid change all around us.

You may find yourself peddling hard to keep abreast of new developments; you may even enjoy the cut and thrust of the ever-changing business environment. We're programmed to keep flexing, remain agile and go with the 'flow' of change all around us, and, indeed, to do so is to show our strength and resilience.

It's essential though to ensure that 'busyness' does not become a barrier to us achieving our goals in either the short or long-term. Following a period of intense disruption, it's more crucial than ever than we carve out some time to really focus on what really matters to us – to establish what we want out of our careers, and what action we need to take now and in the future to ensure those dreams become reality.

That's what taking stock is all about – making some time, away from the distractions of the day-to-day, to really focus on you and the next part of your journey. We know that starting with a blank sheet of paper can be a challenge in itself, so we've devised this workbook to guide you through a series of steps.

You'll start by reviewing your achievements to date, before coming on to recording some key goals you want to realise. From there, you'll make a concrete plan for turning those visions into goal plans, with tangible actions you can incorporate into your to-do list right away.

We'd love to know how you get on – email us at [karenmax@everywoman.com](mailto:karenmax@everywoman.com) or tweet us @everywomanuk

Max & Karen  
and the everywoman team

# Introduction

What do we mean by 'taking stock'? A great definition is 'to make an overall assessment of a particular situation in order to move forward' and that's the goal of this workbook: to help you take a broad but realistic view of achievements and 'things still to do', so that you can see the wood from the trees and think about the direction you want to set off in.

Whether you're evaluating your career progression or thinking about how you want to develop your own experience and learning, it's good to know what path you're on and where you are, in order to plan your next move.

You may feel perfectly content with all that but research shows that being passionate about your work can dramatically improve both your professional performance and your quality of life. Is it possible your contentment is coming from being in your comfort zone? If you are, you might think about giving yourself a little shake-up.

Taking stock from time to time can give you insights into opportunities you wouldn't otherwise recognise. So your task is to approach this as a project and in the same way as you would a task for someone else so that you can be as objective and as analytical as possible. The steps will be to:

- Gather all the relevant information.
- Focus on the facts and evidence.
- Be objective as you examine your data, discard anything that is a diversion.
- Identify any issues.
- Break it down if it's complex.
- Note any patterns or trends, identify cause and effect.
- Draw your conclusions.



## EXERCISE

A good broad approach is to draw up a list of all the aspects of your life that you want to examine. For example:

- Career
- Finances
- Health
- Relationships
- Happiness

NOW LET'S TAKE STOCK OF WHERE YOU STAND AT THE MOMENT. GIVE YOURSELF A SCORE FROM 0 TO 10 ON HOW YOU FEEL YOU'RE DOING AGAINST EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

	SCORE 0-10
<b>CAREER</b> Goals Job satisfaction Work-life balance	
<b>FINANCES</b> Salary Benefits Wider financial goals	
<b>HEALTH</b> Physical Psychological	
<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b> Professional Personal/social	
<b>HAPPINESS</b>	

Let's look at some elements that impact each aspect of these headings. As we go through, make notes of the points which resonate with you and on which you can take action.

# Career

Take time to review your position:

- Where do you stand in relation to your ultimate or current career objective?
- What would the logical next step be?
- What skills do you need to acquire or improve in order to advance?
- What opportunities are available to you now?
- What opportunities will become available if you acquire more knowledge and expand your skill set?

What were your goals at the start of 2020? Did you have a sense of purpose about your work? How have you done against these things and what has changed?



## EXERCISE

WHETHER YOU HAD A FORMAL GOAL-SETTING SESSION AT SOME STAGE OR WHETHER IT'S SIMPLY A LIST IN YOUR MIND, TAKE A MOMENT TO ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS.

GOAL	PROGRESS 0-10	NEXT STEPS
<b>E.g. This year I will learn how to cost a consultancy proposal</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Work with Jane on the next live proposal. Will suggest I do the first draft of costings.</b>

Don't beat yourself up if your progress is in the lower range but do consider objectively why that is the case. Are the reasons internal or external? Many of us will have had our careers interrupted or our progress constrained by different factors and while that is undeniably frustrating, it does not mean we have failed as such.

# As former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill once said: “Success is never final. Failure is never fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts.”

Japanese industry has a great formula for getting to the root of a problem. It is called ‘**Five Whys**’.

The method is incredibly simple: when a problem occurs, you drill down to its root cause by asking “Why?” five times. Then, when a counter-measure becomes apparent, you follow it through to prevent the issue from recurring.

‘Five Whys’ talks about “counter-measures,” rather than “solutions.” - by which they mean an action or set of actions that seeks to prevent the problem from arising again, while a solution may just seek to deal with the symptom.

You can also use the method to review a situation. For example:

I did not achieve the promotion I had expected this year.

I DID NOT ACHIEVE THE PROMOTION I HAD EXPECTED THIS YEAR	
Why did you not receive the promotion?	Another candidate was chosen.
Why was the other candidate chosen?	They had better financial knowledge than I do.
Why did they have better financial knowledge?	They had volunteered for a project on which they would work closely with the Financial Controller.
Why did they do that?	To gain more experience of working with the numbers.
Why did they do that?	In preparation for the promotion opportunity they knew was coming.

Drilling down in this way illuminates the issue and provides clarity. The person in our example can now make their own plans to gain the vital financial knowledge required so that they will be ready for the next opportunity of promotion.

So, whatever your own issue, when you have pinned yourself down and you’re clear about what happened or did not happen and the reasons for it, you are all set to work out what can be done to get back on track.

**Issue**.....

**Solution**.....

**Deadline**.....

There may be several stages to the end goal of your solution so list each step and set yourself a deadline. This will keep you focused and enable you to keep on track.

It may be that your working patterns have changed this year, so another good thinking exercise is to consider these questions:

- **What have you gained in the last 12 months?**

- **What would you like to retain or celebrate?**

- **What have you most missed?**

- **What can you do about it?**

For everyone, having a sense of purpose helps to keep us going. If we work in an industry that has been decimated, we will have been considering how to transfer our skills or create new opportunities. If we have been on furlough or paid temporary leave, we will have been considering how we can ramp up again once we can get back to work. If our business has closed its offices, we will have established a routine for working from home and may now have to work out how to make that sustainable for the longer term.

Whatever your situation, and however difficult it may seem, it is important for us all to take stock and look forward. There may be ways to make your job more rewarding. Rather than sleep-walking into the future, we have the opportunity to consciously design how our life will look in the coming year.

When it comes to job satisfaction, it's good practice to appraise your own situation from time to time.

Ask yourself:

- **Are you happy in your current position? If so, why? If not, why not?**
- **What would have to change to make you happy?**
- **What are your professional strengths? Are you able to use them in this position?**
- **Do you feel that you contribute to the organisation?**
- **Is your contribution recognised by your boss and in your remuneration?**
- **Do you feel excited about going to work at the start of your working week?**

If the answers to these questions are positive, that's good news!  
But if not, there is more thinking to do.





## EXERCISE

### ASK YOURSELF

**Ask yourself, not only now but during the working day, what emotions you are feeling and note them down. If you feel energised, committed, passionate or curious, for example, your work is probably fulfilling. If you feel exhausted, overwhelmed or undervalued, you will need to examine the reasons behind the emotion. Does something or someone specific trigger those negative feelings?**

Look for trends in your emotions. Did you arrive at your desk or the office in a positive frame of mind only to have that ebb away during the working day and if so, what causes that? Does a certain task or project give you greater or lesser satisfaction? Is your mood influenced by interaction with a particular colleague for better or worse? Do you feel as though your contribution is valued?

Think about what is important to you. As you enter different life stages, you may find that your priorities change, and these shifts will impact your working life. Finding work-life balance is important to us all, not only for job satisfaction but for our wellbeing.

#### **Challenge yourself.**

- **Do you have to follow your intended path?**
- **Are you doing what others expect of you or what you really want for yourself?**
- **Are you just doing what you've always done before?**

You don't have to do all of this thinking alone. Certainly it's good to start that way but it may be that the questions it throws up are worth discussing with someone you trust, who is also objective – a mentor perhaps or a trusted advisor. Perhaps it's time to reinvigorate your professional support system. Who else can help analyse your thinking?

When you know what the positives are, capture them. Many people find it useful to keep a journal and record the upbeat things that happen, however large or small, as well as the significant successes they experience. It's human nature to take the good for granted but to dwell on our concerns. Keeping a record will remind you of all the good things in life and at work and help you keep worries and setbacks in perspective.

# Finances

Many of us will have had our financial situation impacted at one point or another, and of course that may take some time to remedy. But a sense of security is vital to our wellbeing, so whatever your circumstances, do what you can to take back control of the situation by making a plan.

Examine where you stand at the moment financially and where you want to be. Seek expert advice as necessary but remember that the current situation will not last forever. If your financial package is not aligned with your needs, you may begin to feel demotivated and less satisfied. Wherever we all are in 6 months to a year, we should be being fairly compensated for the work we do. Salary can be a leading cause of dissatisfaction. Everyone feels they should be paid what they deserve, and certainly as much as someone else doing the same job. In addition to salary, you will want to feel that you have the opportunity for growth and promotion.

**Your remuneration goals may not just be about hard cash. They may be about more flexible working styles, or hours worked, or holiday entitlement.**

So think about your financial goals, list them out and make a **SMART plan** to address them. Some may be fixable in the short term, others may be longer term goals. Articulating them and making a plan, even if you amend it as circumstances change, will make you feel more in control and contribute to your wellbeing.

SPECIFIC	MEASURABLE	ACTION-ORIENTED	REALISTIC AND RELEVANT	TIME BASED
Be very specific about what you want to achieve	Have an objective, clearly defined end point	What exactly do you need to do to get there?	Make sure your goal is relevant to your overall plan	Commit to a realistic deadline for each stage and schedule it into your diary

**‘If you listen to  
your body when it  
whispers, you won’t  
have to hear it  
scream’**

# Health

There's an old adage that 'If you listen to your body when it whispers, you won't have to hear it scream'. Physical health, especially in stressful times, is critical.

The pressures of today's working world demand a lot of each of us. The need to do more, often with less resource, takes a physical and emotional toll.

**We will all have come across people who are burned out - or on their way there.**

McKinsey & Company did a study of the characteristics that drive and sustain top female leaders and found that energy management was a common element of their success. Those leaders understood exactly what drained and sustained them.

Most of us know our own bodies well by now and we also know what is needed to keep them strong and functioning well. However, given that many of us forget or ignore the basics, it is worth reiterating them here!

## **It's about**

- **Getting to bed at a reasonable time. Physical relaxation and proper sleep really matter - everything looks and feels better after a good night's sleep. Even a 20 minute power nap will help.**
- **Giving up or limiting things that disrupt sleep such as devices, caffeine, alcohol.**
- **Hydration and nutrition - dehydration impacts the brain and makes you more tense, sad and confused. Resist the temptation to eat junk food because you feel stressed and short of time - it will make you feel worse.**
- **Physical exercise and fresh air at least once a day. Being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness. Evidence shows it can also improve your mental wellbeing by raising your self esteem, helping you to set goals or challenges and achieve them by causing chemical changes in your brain which can help to positively impact your mood.**
- **Taking regular concentration breaks.**



## EXERCISE

### ARE YOU A LARK OR A NIGHT OWL?

Ask yourself, not only now but during the working day, what emotions you are feeling and note them down. If you feel energised, committed, passionate or curious, for example, it also helps if you can identify when you have peak energy, so that you can manage your daily schedule accordingly. Are you a lark or a night owl? These preferences are real.

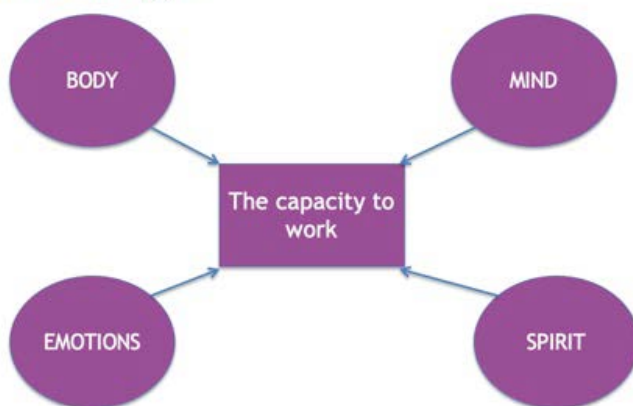
The best way to find out is to keep an energy log. Monitor your working habits for a week, keep a note of when you feel most alert, energised, engaged and able to do the most work. Note the variables - late nights, skipped breakfasts, too much coffee. A useful tactic is to identify the conditions and situations that replenish your energy and those that sap it.

Once you have some data, you will see patterns emerge.

Understanding your own body clock is the key to time management. Without it, you end up exhausted chasing a never-ending cycle of tasks and frustrations.

Energy management begins with looking for your most productive hours in a day. Getting attuned to your body clock won't happen instantly but it's worth the effort involved.

### what is energy?



From Tony Schwartz, CEO of The Energy Project

Developing the capacity to do your best work is not just mental but physical, emotional and spiritual, in the sense that it relates to or affects the human spirit or soul, as opposed to material or physical things.

Psychological or mental health includes our emotional and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices; and is therefore a vital component of our lives.

Research shows typical reasons for stress at work are grouped together under these headings

- **Overload - long hours, always 'on' culture, lack of time, unmanageable workload, unrealistic deadlines (too little to do can also be stressful!)**
- **Conflict - poor or unsupportive relationships with colleagues or superiors, blame culture, weak or micro-management, bullying/harassment.**
- **Lack of control - not being able to have a say about the way you work.**
- **Lack of resources - people, budget, training, equipment etc.**
- **Concerns about job security.**
- **Poor physical environment.**

Naturally our mental health is significantly impacted when we experience stress. Often, we feel out of control and fear we cannot summon the resources to deal with the situation. In response, we need to cultivate resilience. This is the ability to bounce back from stressful situations and work at optimum performance whatever is going on, underpinned by the knowledge that we have survived such situations before and can take practical actions.

It's important to learn behaviours which help you to manage your emotional state, in order to feel positive emotion and release the 'feel good' hormone which allows our minds to think at their best, our bodies to function physically at their best and to feel an overall sense of fulfilment.

**Mindfulness - paying more attention to the present moment** - can also improve your mental wellbeing. This includes your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Mindfulness can help you enjoy life more and understand yourself better. It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

Professor Mark Williams, former director of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, says that mindfulness means knowing directly what is going on inside and outside ourselves, moment by moment.

**"It's easy to stop noticing the world around us. It's also easy to lose touch with the way our bodies are feeling and to end up living 'in our heads' - caught up in our thoughts without stopping to notice how those thoughts are driving our emotions and behaviour," he says.**

**"An important part of mindfulness is reconnecting with our bodies and the sensations they experience. This means waking up to the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of the present moment. That might be something as simple as the feel of a banister as we walk upstairs. Another important part of mindfulness is an awareness of our thoughts and feelings as they happen moment to moment. It's about allowing ourselves to see the present moment clearly. When we do that, it can positively change the way we see ourselves and our lives."**

# Relationships

## “no man is an island”

Connecting with other people is important for your mental wellbeing. They can:

- **help you to build a sense of belonging and self-worth.**
- **give you an opportunity to share positive experiences.**
- **provide emotional support and allow you to support others.**

Think about what you have learned about yourself and others in the last year.  
How can you put this knowledge to good use?

Human beings necessarily depend on one another. As the 16th century poet John Donne said, “no man is an island” – and for that, read no woman either.

Research has linked social isolation and loneliness to higher risks for a variety of physical and mental conditions, and never has this been more clear to us all than now. So, however difficult it may be in current circumstances, and even in good times, pay attention to the relationships in your life.

Reach out to others in the business. Don't restrict all your contact with colleagues and direct reports to virtual conferencing or text/email exchanges. **Pick up the phone from time to time.** Arrange to see them when it's possible to do that.

If there are misunderstandings or disagreements over work, don't let them fester. Pick up the phone and talk it through.

Have a Facetime lunch or coffee break with someone you used to meet in person when you had time in the working day or combine it with an outdoor walk if that's possible. Think about the relationships you have and make an effort to keep them strong.

Review your network and make contact with people as the opportunity arises. **Good relationships need to be nurtured.**

**Stay connected** – don't try to cope with stress alone - use your network, mentor, friends and family.

# Happiness

Happiness is a state of mind, by its nature transitory, defined by feelings of being satisfied with life, in a good mood, feeling positive emotions and enjoyment. The good news is that we can all learn to be happier by finding ways to incorporate more positive feelings into our daily lives.



## EXERCISE

AN IMPORTANT PART OF THIS IS HAVING A SENSE OF PURPOSE. APPLYING THIS IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR WORK, ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

**What are your values? Are they aligned with the task, the company, the industry?**

**What task do you do that inspires you and gives you energy?**

**What makes you feel alive and engaged? What does a good day look like?**

Finding purpose in your work can have a lot to do with your attitude. Deciding to find the positives, feeling thankful for the good stuff and energised about tackling challenges, and employing empathy in your dealings with others will give you a good foundation from which to look outwards and focus on things and people other than yourself. This will help you to find happiness and fulfilment.

You can apply similar questions and thinking to other areas of your life.

Continuing to learn and develop can also raise your levels of happiness by improving your state of mind. Research shows that an individual's wellbeing depends on learning and advancement so even if you feel you do not have enough time, or you may not need to learn new things, there are lots of different ways to bring learning into your life.

Learning new skills will boost your self-confidence, raise your self-esteem, help you to build a sense of purpose and help you to connect with others. Don't feel you have to learn new qualifications or sit exams if this does not interest you (but do make the time if you do have the interest!) The best way is to find activities you enjoy and make them a part of your life.

- **try taking on a new responsibility at work, such as mentoring a junior staff member or improving your presentation skills.**
- **work on a DIY project, such as fixing something that is broken or tackling home improvements.**
- **consider signing up for a course online or through a local college. You could try learning a new language or a practical skill.**
- **try new hobbies that challenge you, such as writing a blog, taking up a new sport or learning to paint or dance.**



The power of positive thought is extraordinary. Deciding to be happier, reframing negative thoughts and looking for the good in things can change your outlook and if you stick with it, can change the way you live your life. Practicing kindness and gratitude will also improve your mental wellbeing by creating positive feelings and a sense of reward, giving you a feeling of purpose and self-worth and helping you connect with other people.

This could be through small acts of kindness towards other people, or larger ones like volunteering in your local community. Examples of the things you could try include:

- making a point of saying thank you to someone for something they have done for you.
- asking friends, family or colleagues how they are and really listening to their answer.
- spending time, even if it's virtual, with friends or relatives who need support or company.
- offering to help someone you know with DIY or a work project.

We don't need to have everything we want in order to be happy – **true happiness can be obtained by finding joy in what we already have, however much or little that may seem.**

# Taking stock and moving forward

Having done your thinking on all of these aspects of your life and current situation, and assuming you take the actions you have noted from this workbook, now let's take stock of what the future may look like.



## EXERCISE

GIVE YOURSELF A NEW SCORE FROM 0 TO 10  
ON EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

	NEW SCORE 0-10
<b>CAREER</b> Goals Job satisfaction Work-life balance	
<b>FINANCES</b> Salary Benefits Wider financial goals	
<b>HEALTH</b> Physical Psychological	
<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b> Professional Personal/social	
<b>HAPPINESS</b>	

Hopefully your anticipated score will have moved closer to 10.



## EXERCISE

NOW CONSIDER AGAINST EACH HEADING WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN TO MAKE THAT CHANGE?

SET YOURSELF A 12 MONTH TIMELINE.  
WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN IN THREE MONTHS,  
IN SIX MONTHS, IN 12 MONTHS TO MOVE YOU  
TOWARDS YOUR GOALS?

	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
<b>CAREER</b> <b>Goals</b> <b>Job satisfaction</b> <b>Work-life balance</b>			
<b>FINANCES</b> <b>Salary</b> <b>Benefits</b> <b>Wider financial goals</b>			
<b>HEALTH</b> <b>Physical</b> <b>Psychological</b>			
<b>PROFESSIONAL PERSONAL/SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS</b> <b>Professional</b> <b>Personal/social</b>			
<b>HAPPINESS</b>			

Then turn each element into a SMART plan. (See page 10)

Throughout this process, bear in mind the following principles:

- **Take control.**
- **Keep a sense of perspective.**
- **Use challenges to learn.**
- **Set goals and tick them off.**
- **Celebrate your successes.**
- **Build personal relationships.**
- **Be kind to yourself and others.**
- **Choose optimism.**

# Taking stock

## Additional resources

The Life Audit - Caroline Righton

Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth - Ed Diener & Robert Biswas-Diener

[Thrive - Arianna Huffington](#)

[Year in review: 50 powerful questions to help you reflect](#)

## everywomanNetwork Resources

[Webinar: Taking stock](#)

[12 empowering questions to ask yourself at the end of the year](#)

[Reviewing and renewing: Unpacking your progress and aligning yourself with your future](#)

[Reviewing and renewing: Building on success, planning the future](#)

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