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INTRODUCTION

Some of the most challenging decisions we will face in our lives will inevitably involve our careers. If we make the right choices, we can generate a profound and positive impact on our lives, which will in turn lead to positive outcomes for our families, finances, and life journey.

This book describes the Five Dimensions of Influence model I designed to help mid- to senior-level executives build a more pragmatic and sustainable career path. If you are, or hope to be, one of these executives, this model will guide you towards roles and companies where you can add value and embrace a career of growth and fulfilment. The model is based on sound career development principles that have been tested over time. It speaks to a modern era, driven by fast-paced change, and focuses on how our natural curiosity can drive our pursuit of knowledge and skills development, while opening exciting pathways to new careers and job opportunities.

Equally, the learnings from this book can be applied to all transitional phases in our lives, whether personal or professional. Our life journey is by its very nature transitional, and we are faced with the challenges of change as we move through various personal and professional growth and development stages.

Developing the Five Dimensions of Influence model

My approach to career management has been shaped by personal experience and informed by a wide spectrum of academic and scientific research conducted by thought leaders in various fields, from early childhood development to psychology, personality analysis, sociology, career path analysis, neuroscience, pedagogics, environmental sciences, spirituality, consciousness thinking, and scenario planning.

My 40-year journey through four different career transitions has informed much of my thinking. If you have never experienced a major career transition, it is difficult to fully comprehend the anxiety, loss of confidence, extreme uncertainty, and real panic associated with such a change. However, these feelings are also accompanied by a great sense of upliftment, excitement about one's prospects, and a burning curiosity about the possibilities that change brings. Changing jobs is challenging at the best of times, but changing careers is a truly life-changing and exhilarating experience. For me the one thing that was missing was a solid framework or model that I could use to help me navigate this journey.

Mapping out your journey of discovery through deep reflection and taking on new opportunities allows you to repurpose your career from time to time. It brings home an understanding of where you are in your professional growth and personal lifecycle, an understanding of what you are good at, and a knowledge of what drives you at an emotional or spiritual level. These last few elements are sometimes the hardest to pin down, but they are the keys to finding your reason for being.

Pathways to growth and development

Within these pages I cover the complex nature of career growth, job changes, and transitions into new careers using the Five Dimensions of Influence model as a basis.

No matter what profession we choose for ourselves, we need to keep driving our personal growth and development to remain relevant and excited by the work that we do. Growth leads to change, and change is the dynamo that drives our innovation and purpose in life. Such personal growth is too important to leave in the hands of others, therefore, we must drive it ourselves. Being in command of your career journey is one of the most powerful gifts you can give yourself and the people who love and depend on you.

This book does not delve into the complexities of gender inequality, racial- or class-bias, or religious and other exclusions. The world is riddled with enough of these sad reflections on our society that only serve to demean people and stultify individual and societal growth. This book does, however, talk to the magnificent qualities that reside in each one of us, while offering a way of thinking that will help you to unlock these qualities to promote your career growth, no matter who you are, or where in the world you live.

The Five Dimensions of Influence model provides you with a framework that you can use to unleash these qualities by knowing:

- Who you are.
- What you can do.
- Where you can do it best.
- The stage of life you're in.
- What you want to achieve with your efforts.

I believe that, if given the opportunity, we are all able to discover and appreciate the golden threads that have been woven into the fabric of our personalities, careers, and life journeys. These golden threads create incredible tapestries that reflect our life stories. By identifying them, knowing where to find them, and learning how to weave them into our career journeys, we can grow beyond our wildest dreams.

These compelling golden threads are embedded in the Five Dimensions of Influence model, which I hope will offer you some insights to

help you manage and build your career and life journey with a level of certainty, excitement and purpose, less risk, and less guesswork.

Future purpose and meaning

Central to this book are the aspects of purpose and meaning, and their importance in guiding us towards achieving our goals and dreams.

If you are looking for new, more exciting career growth, you'll need to start on a journey of discovery to find work that is meaningful to you and that touches a deeper sense of purpose. Finding that purpose could be quick or may take a lifetime, or you may never truly find it. Nevertheless, it is a quest worth pursuing, as your sense of purpose is a central energy into which you can tap. It is the spring from which you can drink throughout your life.

The second renaissance

'Renaissance' is a French word meaning rebirth. It refers to a period in European civilization that was marked by a revival of classical learning and wisdom. The Renaissance saw many contributions to different fields, including new scientific laws, forms of art and architecture, and religious and political ideas. It resulted in three centuries of innovation and change, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century.

Interestingly, the actual Renaissance in Italy was preceded by a proto-renaissance, inspired by Franciscan radicalism, when St. Francis of Assisi went into the poverty-stricken neighborhoods, praising the beauty and spiritual value of nature. As one of the great examples of someone who took a decision to move into a purpose-focused life, St. Francis, on returning from battle, gave up the sword and took up a lifelong service to God. The church in Assisi that was built in St. Francis's honor, took six generations of builders and craftsmen 300 years to complete.

Walking through this monument to purpose, one finds it difficult to even comprehend the sheer dedication required, and ongoing meaningfulness that the construction of this vast church could provide to so many generations of people. Across Europe, St. Francis's work inspired painters, such as Giotto, and poets, such as Dante, as well as writers, to focus on the beauty of nature and the natural balance between man and nature. The philosophers of the time, such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, wrote the scripts and shaped the intellectual debates that resulted in the foundations of our political systems of today.

Another event occurred just before the proto-renaissance—the bubonic plague. The so-called Black Death of 1348 started in China and then arrived on rat-infested ships in Sicily and swept across Europe, killing about 20 million people.¹

Those same ships from China also carried books and documents that contained never-before-heard-of wisdoms and technological designs, as well as maps of the world that later European explorers would use to “discover” places that China had already visited many years before.

We are now in the initial steps of the first phase of a second renaissance and we are witnessing a fascinating congruence of the science of the mind with the science of technology, and the state of nature. Across every aspect of human endeavor, we are seeing unprecedented levels of innovation and design including: medical breakthroughs, personalized learning from junior grades all the way into adult learning, innovations in transport, agriculture, architecture, neuroscience, photography, art, engineering, artificial intelligence, finance, corporate structures, the protection of ecosystems, and the study of the inner self.

How do we innovate at speed, retain the wisdom of the ages, and at the same time keep ourselves, our teams, and our organizations delivering on their purpose? These are the challenges facing every senior executive and board director. This future-focused approach and all the amazing opportunities that it presents, is the new fertile ground for planting the seeds of our future purpose.

I encourage you to become part of this renaissance to give both your inner and outer life purpose and meaning. This is what I mean by the term *future purpose*.

ADAPTING TO OUR SHIFTING WORLD

“It’s not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change.”

—Charles Darwin

The global coronavirus pandemic has had a seismic impact on careers and the world of work. Many organizations have undergone massive organizational, cultural, and strategic shifts in the past few years, which in turn, pushed many of us to reexamine our careers, our personal priorities, and life purposes. What might have seemed like a well-planned career in 2019 could now look very different in terms of financial reward and future purpose.

At the heart of these changes lies a profound realignment of power dynamics between the company and the employee. This had been coming for some time, but the Covid-19 pandemic and the millennial generation shifted this change into top gear. Ever since the start of the industrial era we have been governed by a social contract between employee and employer: That the employee will work for the company on the company’s terms and conditions. In its worst form it has led to a

modern form of enslavement, and at its best, an opportunity for people to develop and become fabulously wealthy. Irrespective, the company has largely been in control of the contract. This has changed to a degree, causing realignment of the power balance and the nature of the contract between workers and companies.

We are now in the throes of understanding this shift; some industries will be less affected than others, and some professions will not be affected at all. But the change is real, and it opens massive opportunities for companies to reevaluate their employee value proposition and for employees to take charge of their own careers.

Many people over 50 are being forced into early retirement at the peak of their value-add, while their working lives have been extended because of improved health. Still, they face redundancy before their time. It is these individuals who have the most to gain by planning transitions into new roles, industries, and careers.

Women face their own unique challenges. They are often in the difficult position of having to choose between a full-time career and motherhood. This decision may impact on their professional development if they have opted to be mothers, making them exceptionally vulnerable in their later years should they need to earn an income.

It is precisely because of these upheavals that we can safely say that good career planning and a thorough focus on our personal and professional development deep into our later years has never been more relevant.

Hitting the refresh button

Workplace downscaling and restructuring has prompted many people to hit the refresh button in their lives. Others might even have found themselves the recipients of massive career opportunities that developed due to the new technologies that are driving this fast-paced renaissance.

Across the world, there has been a realignment of talent and skills to accommodate the restructuring of organizations, accompanied by a

huge increase in e-commerce and the redesign of supply chains. This has led to an increasing alignment of innovation, artificial intelligence (AI), technology, and strategy, opening opportunities for new business models. As a society, we are only now beginning to understand just how interconnected our world is, with leaders propelled towards greater levels of systemic thinking.

The pandemic was also a catalyst for profound changes in how many of us view our relationship with nature. All over the world people are discovering their own deeper connection with nature and appreciating nature for its intrinsic value as a life support system for the entire planet. More and more people are moving to the countryside and becoming aware of the need to protect our biodiversity. All of this has also deepened our understanding of the purpose that drives us, both as a society and as individuals.

The Five Dimensions of Influence model

The Five Dimensions of Influence model represents the five most powerful factors that influence our career decisions. The decisions that we make about which careers to follow, when to change them, how to develop them, and how to leverage our careers for maximum advantage, are all influenced by these five factors. We are influenced by them at a subconscious and conscious level, at every stage of our lives. If we teach ourselves to understand their influence on our career decisions, we will be one step ahead in the learning curve of life.

The Five Dimensions of Influence are:

1. **Origins**—where we come from.
2. **Development**—using talent and building capability.
3. **Context**—our work environment.
4. **Stages of life**—journey of personal and professional growth.
5. **Purpose**—why we do what we do.

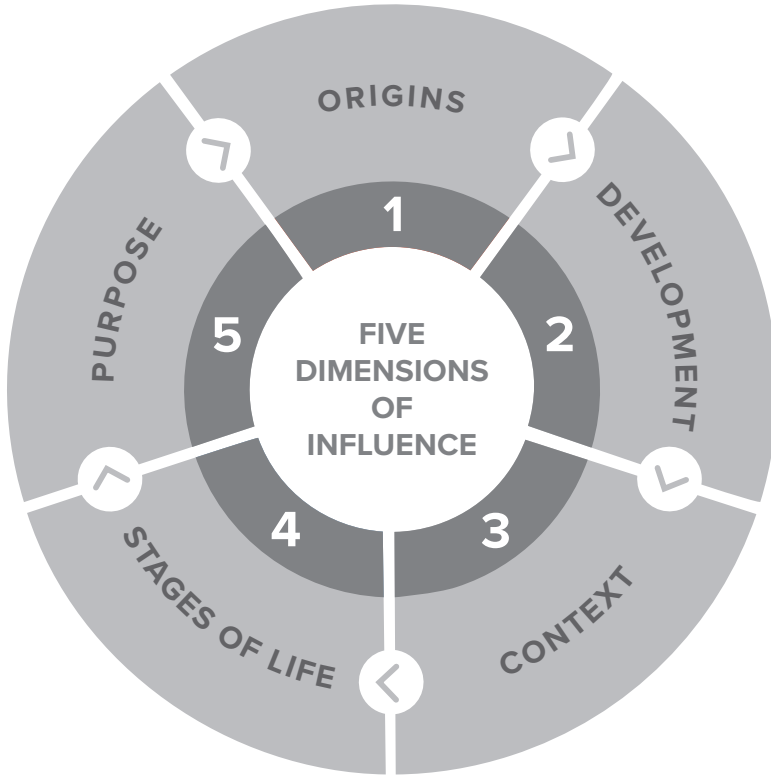


Figure 1 A diagrammatic view of the Five Dimensions of Influence model

The environment in which we grow up—our **origins**—influences at a profound level our values and what careers we want to follow. Our exposure to various kinds of educational **development** and training impacts directly on our ability to grow our talents and passions. We are deeply influenced by the **context** in which we live and work, but we should also be able to choose the contexts in which we flourish and grow. The **stages of our lives** have an ongoing influence on decisions that involve our careers and sense of **purpose**. Each stage of life offers new insights, new endings and new beginnings, as well as different levels of understanding what matters to us.

The five influences described in this book form a matrix of impact on every career decision that we take, and if we are able to harness and understand these influences, we are better equipped to weather the challenges that life throws at us, and to develop and shine in our professional lives.

As shown in Figure 2 below, the five influences keep impacting on our development and life experience, providing ongoing learning in a cyclical pattern. While the model may appear to flow from one stage to the next, the stages are fluid and may circle back on each other, adding layers of depth and richness to our experience. For instance, as we gain life and work experience, we may change our values or views of ourselves. A change of life stage may drive us to reeducate ourselves and gain new skills to take up positions of increasing complexity. We may change careers, which requires us to gain new skills and education. We may discover our purpose very early on in our journey, or only much later. For a truly fulfilling and meaningful career, purpose lies at the heart of our planning.

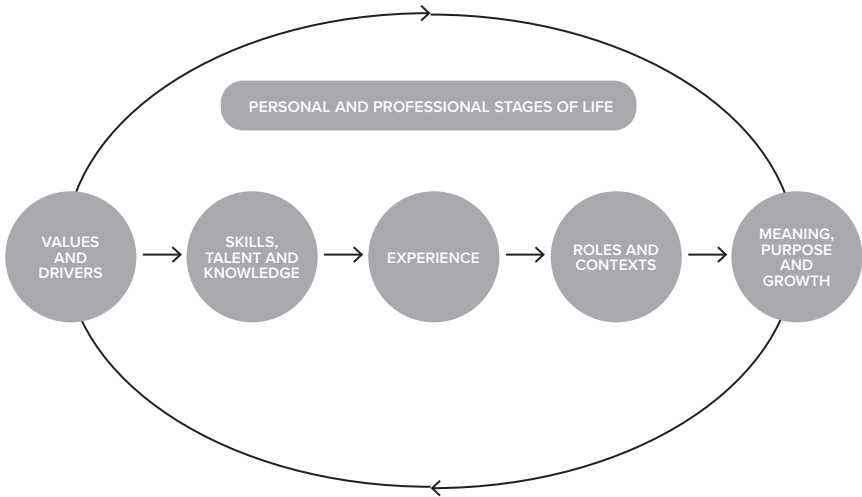


Figure 2 The cyclical nature of the Five Dimensions

The impact of the Five Dimensions of Influence on career decisions

The model initiates an early-stage focus on looking inward. This involves reflecting on our origins, our early years of development, and the formulation of worldviews. It is this inward view and inner voice that drives and directs us at a conscious and subconscious level. In looking back, we can sometimes identify experiences where we leaned on, or rejected, that directional force. These often represent moments of achievement or failure. It's almost like being at the center of a flywheel where our inner values and worldviews represent the axle on which the wheel spins.

As the conversation progresses, the inward focus of the person around their origins and youth shifts outwards in expanding concentric circles to the other four dimensions of influence in the model—like the circles formed when a pebble lands in a pond.

In this way, our early childhood influences start being overshadowed by the more powerful influences to which we are exposed, such as the development of new knowledge and experience, and exposure to different contexts, ideologies, and cultures. As we journey through the various stages of life, our learnings eventually consolidate into a sense of meaningfulness and purpose, but our formative years are never far away.

By offering a holistic view of our careers and lifelong learning, the Five Dimensions of Influence model provides a solid framework with which to enter a multi-dynamic conversation with ourselves about our growth, potential, consciousness, ethics, and purpose in life.

The framework that this model offers is best used by taking each short- or long-term career decision you will make and then viewing that decision through the five key lenses listed in the table below.

The chapters that follow describe, in detail, why and how these influences play such an important part in our career decisions, and how we can harness them to our advantage. We also look at when and

where these factors are critical, and how to balance them within our own ongoing, personal, risk-management process.

Questions you should ask before making a job or career change	
1.	How does the new role, career, or place that I am moving to align with my core values and sense of self that has emerged from my origins? Is alignment important for this decision, and if so, why?
2.	Is there sufficient alignment between the demands of the new career or role and my current levels of knowledge, skills, experience, talent and passion?
3.	Knowing that each role and company has some very well-defined contextual realities and nuances, how will my personal makeup and professional capability align with that context, and will I grow and develop in that context?
4.	Understanding that personal and financial needs change over time, how will this new job or career align with my current stage of life, my financial journey, and my professional growth?
5.	Does this role provide me with some level of meaningfulness, and does it align with a deeper sense of personal purpose that will energize me in the short-, medium-, or long-term?

It goes without saying that the insights gained from this book can equally be applied by organizations to top-team talent management, organizational design, culture dynamics, succession planning, and in multiple forms of leadership development, particularly during transitions where high-potential executives are being moved into C-Suite and CEO, or even board, roles.

I will focus on the road to the C-Suite. This includes middle- and senior-career levels spanning one's late 30s through to mid-60s. The older you get, the greater the risk when making a career change. Transitioning into the C-Suite is a strategic move that requires proper planning and an advanced understanding of what awaits you.

Although the Five Dimensions of Influence model is applicable for all professions, I have used the business sector as the main backdrop in this book.

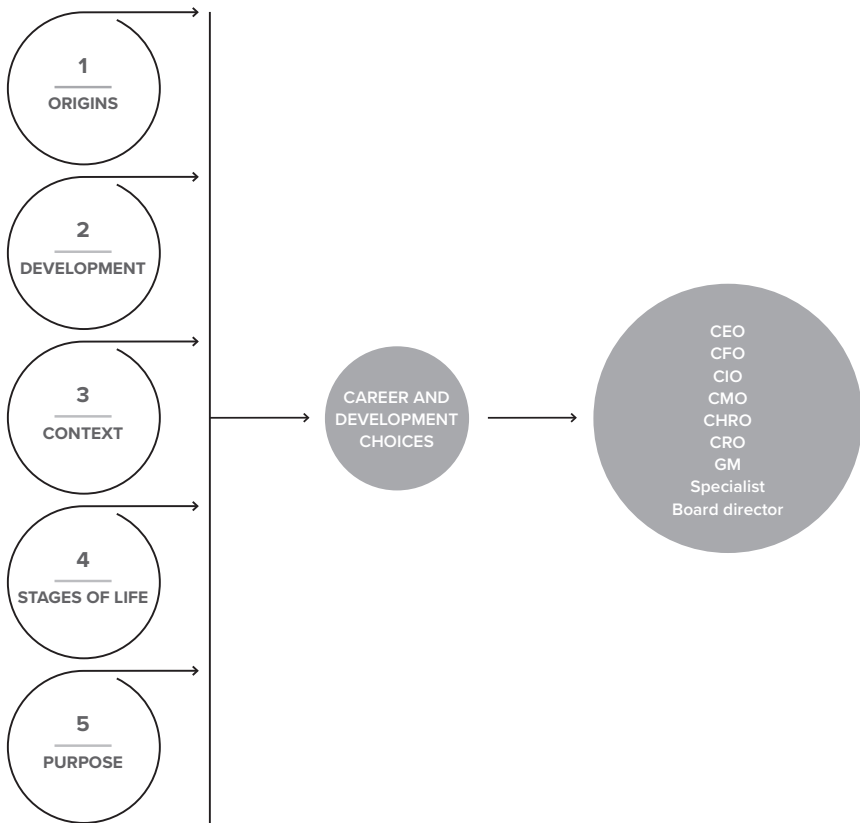


Figure 3 The impact of the Five Dimensions

1

ORIGINS

WHERE WE COME FROM

